



DD-YD/ETD (2024) 133

Strasbourg, 27 May 2024

# **World Forum for Democracy 2024**

## **DEMOCRACY and DIVERSITY: CAN WE TRANSCEND THE DIVIDES?**



## **YOUTH DELEGATION IN THE WORLD FORUM**

**4-8 November 2024**  
European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, France

## **CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS**

**Deadline: 30 June 2024**

## About the World Forum for Democracy

The [World Forum for Democracy](#) is an annual gathering of policy-makers, academics, activists, youth representatives and democracy innovators, in the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg (France).

The Forum serves as 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.

Organised on an annual basis, the programme of the Forum features inspirational talks by thought leaders. Analytical labs will challenge proposed new solutions and identify ideas worth spreading. Moreover, the Forum will actively foster the creation of networks and communities of practice, serving as incubators for turning ideas into action.

The Forum contributes to the implementation of the Reykjavik Principles of Democracy adopted by the Heads of State and Government of Council of Europe member states at their [Fourth Summit in Reykjavik](#) in May 2023.

## The 2024 Forum: Democracy and Diversity

In a year during which around one half of the world's population has been called to the polls, the 2024 edition of the World Forum for Democracy will address the critical threats posed by disinformation and divisive political narratives around diversity, including in the context of election campaigns. The Forum will focus on how electoral processes may inadvertently crystallise societal divides and provide fertile ground for populism to flourish. In light of the urgency of this challenge, the Forum will explore ways of raising understanding among citizens of the risks posed by populism for their fundamental rights and freedoms.

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

- *Elections and value divides*  
Elections are pivotal moments in democratic life, yet they have become flashpoints where deep-seated value divides are exacerbated. The Forum will offer a deep dive into the potential of inclusive electoral practices and new ideas to overcome binary thinking and foster unity within diverse societies.
- *Unravelling the web of disinformation*  
Disinformation, particularly online, is a powerful tool to manipulate public opinion, sow discord, and erode trust in democratic institutions. The Forum will analyse the mechanics of disinformation campaigns, their impact on democratic processes, and explore innovative strategies to counteract this threat.
- *Citizen engagement for democratic renewal*  
Many democracies are facing a crisis of citizen engagement. Democratic organisations which can freely associate are a prerequisite for civil society being able to foster citizen engagement. They help creating social capital, trust and confidence which are instrumental in shaping democratic outcomes. The Forum will assess the extent to which democratic institutions reflect a changing *demos* and whether population diversity is adequately

represented in public life, business, culture, sports and other areas of democratic life. It will look into new forms of citizens' engagement and decision-making which can help create spaces for constructive dialogue, foster understanding and young people's engagement, and build consensus on policy solutions that transcend narrow interest and deliver the common good.

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.

### **The role of the "youth delegation"**

The Council of Europe youth sector aims at enabling young people across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe's core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Youth for Democracy programme reflects this in four work priorities:

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

The Reykjavik Declaration strengthened the role of youth policy by including a youth perspective in the Organisation's intergovernmental and other deliberations. This dimension is in addition to the principle of youth participation in decision-making which the Council of Europe has been implementing in its co-managed youth sector for more than 50 years. The Reykjavik Declaration demands a youth perspective and youth participation in decision-making processes in public policies and democratic institutions in general. The youth perspective should include:

- *Thinking* with youth
- *Learning* from and with youth
- *Participating* with youth
- *Acting* with youth and for youth

The World Forum for Democracy is not just a platform for discussion but a call to action. As an annual gathering of policy-makers, academics, activists, youth representatives and democracy innovators, in the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg, it contributes to the implementation of the Reykjavik Principles of Democracy.

The participation of a youth "delegation" in the Forum is rooted in the history of youth participation and of the inclusion of a youth perspective in the work of the organisation and of the forum itself. The role of young people and youth civil society organisations in contributing to the revitalising of democracy has been recently most visible in the campaign [Democracy Here, Democracy Now](#) as expressed in the Call for Action, and in the youth event [Confidence in Tomorrow](#) organised on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council of Europe.

The importance of youth participation in the World Forum is undisputed; *meaningful* youth participation implies that the youth participants are prepared, motivated and confident about their role. To support this, the Youth Department organised since several years the composition and preparation of the delegation. The specificity of the preparatory activity is that it combines highly intercultural activities in a non-formal learning setting with participation in a large-scale institutional event.

The participants of the youth delegation will gather in Strasbourg two days before the start of the Forum 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.

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; the Participants will be invited to choose their preference for attending.

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.

Timeline of the 2024 Youth Delegation					
September – October	3 November	4-5 November	6-8 November	9 November	
<b>Preparations</b>	<b>Arrival of participants</b>	<b>Preparation of Youth Delegation</b>	<b>Participation in the World Forum programme</b>	<b>Departure of participants</b>	
Online	European Youth Centre (EYC)		Headquarters and EYC		

### Objectives of the activity

The organisation and participation of the youth delegation in the World Forum for Democracy 2024 pursues the following objectives:

- To secure a meaningful participation of youth leaders and young people in all the aspects of the World Forum for Democracy
- To promote a youth perspective in the work of the forum, in particular on matters related top democracy and diversity
- To identify and share current trends, concerns and priorities of young people across the globe regarding democracy, diversity and the challenges to both concepts
- To enhance intercultural dialogue and cooperation by young people within a framework of democratic participation and human rights.

### Profile of the youth participants

The youth delegation will bring together some 60 participants who represent the diversity of young people around the globe and bring in a variety of perspectives on Democracy and Diversity. In order to be selected and participate in the World Forum 2024, the youth applicants must be:

- Between 18 and 30 years of age;
- Able to communicate and work in English;
- Actively involved in youth organisations or other civil society organisations working with young people on issues of democracy and diversity;
- Motivated to share their experiences on democracy and diversity and to contribute to

- developing new ideas on democracy and diversity;
- 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 3 November and departing on 9 November).

The youth delegates will be chosen on the basis of these criteria, which will be assessed based on an analysis of the online application form. The overall group should represent the various world regions, with a majority of participants coming from Council of Europe member states.

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 by filling the online application form accessible through this link:

It is in the interest of applicants to provide complete information, especially about their involvement with the issues of democracy and diversity. The secretariat of the Council of Europe uses AI-recognition software; applicants are strongly advised *not to* make use of artificial intelligence software in filling in their applications.

The selection committee may organise interviews or other forms of enquiring further about the applicants.

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 around mid-September 2024 if their application has been accepted or rejected, and if they have been put on the waiting list.

### **Deadline for applications**

The application form must be completed online at <https://youthapplications.coe.int> before **30 June 2024, 23:59** CET. Potential applicants are strongly advised to apply well in advance before the deadline in order to check that their registration is complete and to solve any possible technical problems before the deadline. Any email received after the deadline will not be considered. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

In case of technical problems with the use of the platform, please send an e-mail to [youthapplications@coe.int](mailto:youthapplications@coe.int) before the deadline. Emails received after the deadline will not be answered.

For any other questions please send an e-mail to [WFDYouth@coe.int](mailto:WFDYouth@coe.int).

### **Financial and practical conditions of participation**

All selected participants should arrive on Sunday, the 3 of November and depart on Saturday, the 9<sup>th</sup> of November. The preparation programme for the Youth Delegation is obligatory for all selected participants and will take place on Monday and Tuesday (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of November) at the European Youth Centre prior to the beginning of the Forum on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.

### **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 Sunday, 3 November and departure on Saturday, 9 of November). Participants will be accommodated at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg.

The youth centre 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.