

World Forum for Democracy, Strasbourg, France, 5-7 November 2025

**Democracy at risk: how can we revive it?**

# Call for initiatives

The World Forum for Democracy is a platform for global dialogue between policymakers and civil society about contemporary democracy challenges and solutions. It highlights innovative ideas and initiatives and puts them through a thorough examination, to serve as inspiration for the Council of Europe and for states and no-state actors across the world. A unique event of its kind, the Forum contributes to the evolution of democracy towards more participatory and inclusive institutions and processes.

**WHY IS THE WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY SPECIAL?**

 Citizens are increasingly dissatisfied with democracy due to social and economic inequality, technological shifts, and the feeling of being ignored. This erodes trust in institutions, weakening their legitimacy and stability.

**WHAT IS THE 13th WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY ABOUT?**

Declining civic engagement makes democracies vulnerable to populists and autocrats who undermine checks and balances, restrict freedoms and delegitimise public watchdogs in order to consolidate and entrench their power.

**Journalism, arts, and culture** support democracy by fostering pluralism and public engagement. However, authoritarian regimes often suppress these sectors to weaken critical voices and pluralistic debate.

**Digital technologies, particularly AI,** enable manipulation of public debate and foster polarisation. Online platforms’ engagement-driven models not only amplify divisive content and disinformation but also, through their recommendation systems, shape public opinion while outpacing traditional media in a zero-sum contest.

Young people, though active on digital platforms, are a declining demographic in many societies. **Enhancing their participation and their skills for critical thinking are** crucial for preserving democratic freedoms.

The 13th World Forum for Democracy will debate the issues and generate new ideas for tackling the challenges to living peacefully in complex societies, which we face today. **Plenary sessions** will be an opportunity to discuss with speakers from all continents, including politicians, public officials and representatives of the private sector, international organisations and civil society. The sessions **“Time for Ideas**” will include short presentations by academics, policymakers and other experts, and the presentation of 3 to 4 innovative initiatives, followed by an extensive discussion with the audience.

**WHAT IS THE FORMAT OF
THE 13th WFD?**

The initiatives are the heart of the World Forum for Democracy. Their objective is to address specific issues through their critical analysis, thus identifying solutions and ideas worth spreading. The selected initiatives, submitted by any public or private organisations, will be briefly presented and critically assessed by multidisciplinary panels and participants in the “Time for Ideas” session. The key conclusions and lessons learnt from these sessions will be discussed in a summing up session to prepare the overall conclusions of the Forum. The Forum participants will vote to choose the winner of the Democracy Innovation Award among the presented initiatives.

**TIME FOR IDEAS**

 **WHO CAN PRESENT AN INITIATIVE AND HOW?**

**The World Forum for Democracy calls for expressions of interest from innovative initiatives, from all over the world, aiming at finding solutions to revive democracy.**

**These may be for example, but not limited to:**

* Initiatives addressing the social and economic factors and inequalities that undermine trust in democracy.
* New approaches to empowering the underprivileged or underrepresented and economically disadvantaged groups and increasing their political mobilisation.
* Alternative methods of making policy decisions, including, but not limited to, sortition, deliberative democracy, citizen panels, liquid democracy, and similar forms of expressions of the citizens’ will.
* Innovative methods for fostering and sustaining meaningful political engagement, including that of young people, women and minorities.
* AI tools supporting informed debate, deliberation, participation and decision-making.
* Cultural initiatives affirming democratic values, active citizenship and open debate.
* Actions fostering artistic freedom and support artists against censorship and persecution.
* Initiatives promoting freedom of expression and offering support to independent media and high-quality journalism, as well as initiatives developing innovative methods to counter news bias, ensure transparency of media ownership and promote media sustainability.
* Initiatives that address challenges related to the dissemination of online content, promote human rights-compliant platform design, and enhance accountability of platforms for the societal impact of their algorithms.
* Mechanisms for improving resilience to disinformation and manipulation, including tools to detect deep fakes and remove fake accounts from online platforms, as well as initiatives strengthening and promoting fact-checking practices.
* Initiatives supporting civil society organisations to act as democratic watchdogs.

Submissions from any public or private organisation should be made by answering the questionnaire in the appendix and sending it to **forum\_democracy@coe.int** by **31 May 2025.**

**HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION?**

One presenter for the selected initiatives will be invited to Strasbourg to take part in the World Forum. Travel and accommodation expenses may be covered by the Council of Europe if required.

For further information about the World Forum for Democracy 2025, please visit our [website.](https://www.coe.int/en/web/world-forum-democracy/home)



World Forum for 5-7 November 2025, Strasbourg

**Democracy at risk: can we revive it**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**For the submission of an initiative at the World Forum for Democracy**

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| Country:  |
| Organisation/institution:  |
| Title of the initiative:  |
| Contact person:  |
| Address:  |
| Telephone:  |
| Mobile phone:  |
| E-mail:  |
| Website:  |
|  |
| **PART 1 – DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIATIVE** |
| Brief presentation of the organisation (legal status, number of members/employees, field of operation, goals, other relevant information). |
| (max. 300 words) |
| Brief description of the initiative which will be presented during the World Forum for Democracy: goals, actions, scope, participants, partners. If the initiative is selected, your description below will be put on the website of the World Forum for Democracy (www.wfdemocracy.org) |
| (max. 200 words) |
| What is the origin of the initiative (sources of inspiration, relevant academic debate etc.)?  |
| (max. 300 words) |
| How does this initiative contribute to social cohesion and promotion of diversity? |
| (max. 400 words) |
| How was the initiative implemented? |
|  |
| What have been the results so far?  |
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| Which indicators did you use to assess the initiative’s results? |
|  |
| What challenges have been encountered in the implementation phase? |
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| How does your initiative differ from other similar existing initiatives? What makes your initiative a democracy innovation? |
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| To what extent is your initiative transferable to other organisations and countries? |
|  |
| Any additional relevant information/references. |
|  |
| **PART 2 – THE PRESENTATION OF THE INITIATIVE** **at the World Forum for Democracy****The Role of the Presenter**Up to three initiatives will be presented in each session. The presentation of each initiative will be limited to 10 minutes.Presenters are encouraged to divide their presentation into the following points:1. Brief outline of the initiative - objectives and implementation
2. Documented impact, results
3. Challenges and difficulties, unintended effects
4. Plans for the future and broad implications for democracy change; required action/standard-setting or other by public authorities to enhance impact and limit challenges

 Please do not focus on technical details but on the significance of your initiative for democratic practice and systemic change.Presentations will be followed by brief (5 min) comments which will not address technical aspects of the initiatives but look into their effects – both intended and unintended – on the challenges facing democracy, and more generally on the functioning and evolution of democracy, outlining the possible solutions. The remaining time will be used for discussion with the audience.**If selected, and if you wish to prepare a PowerPoint presentation, please prepare and send it no later than 30 September 2025,** to help interpreters prepare.  |
| **PART 3 - PRACTICAL INFORMATION****(Please note: the following information will not feed into the jury’s assessment of your initiative)** |
| Please indicate who will present the initiative, as well as a replacement in case of an emergency that prevents the first presenter from participating in the Forum (Mr/Ms, name, position, city, country, e-mail, telephone): |
|  |
| Language of presentation: |
| * English
* French
 |
| Will you need a Visa for entering France? |
| * Yes
* No
 |
| Are you in position to fund your participation in the World Forum? |
| * Yes
* Partly (travel)
* No
 |
| Will you need assistance during the World Forum because of any kind of disability? |
| * Yes
* No

(Please note that the Palais building is accessible to people with mobility issues).  |
| Could you please list the social media accounts of your initiative? |
| * Facebook
* Instagram
* Twitter
* TikTok
* Other (please specify)
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