



DFD-YD/ETD (2024) 154rev

Strasbourg, 12 July 2024

**COMING OF AGE DURING WAR  
YOUTH WORK IN UKRAINE TODAY  
HOW CAN EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY ADAPT?**

**SEMINAR**

30 September - 4 October 2024  
European Youth Centre in Strasbourg

**CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS**

This call is launched in the framework of the "Youth for Democracy" programme.

## CONTEXT

The lives of too many young people are still shaped by war and its consequences. Young people coming to the age under the conditions of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine are deprived to enable to fully benefit from one of the Council of Europe's core values of human rights on a daily basis. Studies show that the war has seriously negatively affected the well-being of the young people of Ukraine, irrespective of whether they live inside or outside the country, and of young people across Europe. Fear for the future is widespread and young people's confidence in peaceful and democratic societies is challenged.

Key actors of youth work and youth policy, both professionals and volunteers, play an important role in supporting young people living in the context of war, through the promotion of a human-rights based approach to youth work, focusing on participation, inclusion and well-being. Conditions of war challenge the capacity of stakeholders to address the pressing needs and concerns of the young people of Ukraine, whether uprooted or still living in their home communities. The [4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member states which took place in Reykjavik on 16 and 17 May 2023](#) declared that ensuring a democratic future for all in Europe requires investment in the participation of young people in democratic life. Without a certain level of well-being and appropriate conditions, it becomes significantly more difficult young people of Ukraine to benefit from this.

## SEMINAR

The [Youth Department of the Council of Europe](#), in cooperation with the [Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine](#) are organising a seminar entitled 'COMING OF AGE DURING WAR. YOUTH WORK IN UKRAINE TODAY. HOW CAN EUROPEAN YOUTH POLICY ADAPT?' from 30 September to 4 October 2024 (working days) at the [European Youth Centre in Strasbourg](#).

The seminar will bring together up to 30 professional practitioners and volunteer working with young people of Ukraine to develop their understanding of a human rights-based approach to youth work in supporting the well-being of young people coming of age in war conditions. The outcomes of this seminar will be reflected in the 4th [European Youth Work Convention](#) in May 2025 and the [Conference of Ministers](#) responsible for Youth in October 2025.

### Objectives of the seminar:

The seminar will

- analyse and develop participating stakeholders' understanding of the challenges and needs of young people coming of age in war conditions, notably young people of Ukraine.
- map practices of human rights-based youth work that can ensure the participation, inclusion and well-being of young people of Ukraine displaced by the war within their country or other Council of Europe [member states](#).
- familiarise participating stakeholders with the various instruments of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe that can support them in ensuring the participation, inclusion, social cohesion, and well-being of young people living in the context of war.
- explore the role of youth policies in Europe in supporting young people experiencing war and its consequence, and in addressing their key needs and challenges, also in the context of the EU accession process of Ukraine.
- develop ideas and recommendations for sustaining and improving youth work and youth policy responses to the negative consequences of the Russian war of aggression on the well-being of young people of Ukraine and of war on young people, more broadly.

This activity is a direct follow up of the [seminar on the role of youth work in supporting mental well-being of young people affected by war, held in 2023<sup>1</sup>](#), which proposed recommendations for different stakeholders on delivering youth work with young people affected by traumatic events due to war, military conflict and related crimes. One of the conclusions of this activity is that psychological well-being of young people is strongly connected to the empowerment, participation, social cohesion, and the creation of a safe environment for young people in the community where they live. This is a core function of youth work in times of peace and must be ensured and improved during times of war.

## **Programme and methodology**

The programme of the activity will be based on the principles and approaches of non-formal learning, building from the experiences and practices of the participants. Key elements of the programme include:

- concepts and terms of a human-rights based approach to youth work.
- standards and practices of a human-rights based approach to youth work.
- standards and instruments of the Council of Europe and its youth department for human-rights based approaches to youth work.
- guidance on supporting well-being of young people during times of war.
- standards and practices of youth policy that can support youth work in developing the participation, inclusion well-being of young people.
- exploration of how European youth policies are adapting to the realities of young people living and growing up in war, also in the context of the EU accession process of Ukraine.

The programme will also include exchange of views with members of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly ([PACE](#)) on the role of youth policies and youth work in supporting young people living and growing up in war.

## **PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS**

This seminar is addressed to youth sector stakeholders concerned with addressing the consequences of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine on the lives of young people, including but not limited to:

1. Youth workers and representatives of youth centres:
  - a. working with young people in Ukraine, including but not limited to internally displaced young people.
  - b. working with young people living outside of Ukraine in other Council of Europe member states.
2. Youth policy makers in Ukraine concerned with addressing the consequences of war on young people's lives through policy and programme development.
3. Practitioners and policy makers with specialised experience and competences of working with young people affected by war from other member states of the Council of Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> The seminar brought together participants from Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Türkiye, Ukraine and Kosovo\*.

\*All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

The Council of Europe welcomes applications from all candidates who fulfil the specific criteria of this call irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

All candidates must apply online via relatively available form at <https://youthapplications.coe.int/>. **Deadline is 11 August 2024, 23:59 CET.** The candidates who are using the platform for the first time are required to create an account by [the link](#).

The Council of Europe and the Ministry selected up to 30 participants on the basis of the profile outlined above.

## ORGANISERS

The Council of Europe [Youth Department](#) is co-organising the seminar with the [Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine](#) within the [Framework Programme](#). The project [Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Phase III](#) contributes its expertise to this activities.

## FINANCIAL AND PRACTICAL CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

### Travel expenses

Travel expenses to and from Strasbourg will be reimbursed according to the rules of the Council of Europe. The participants will be informed in due time regarding travel procedures. The Council of Europe ensures that all participants travelling within the territory of Ukraine will have special insurance within their travel. Only the participants who attend the entire training course can be reimbursed.

### Accommodation

Board and lodging for the seminar will be provided and paid by the Council of Europe at the [European Youth Centre in Strasbourg](#) from **29 September to 5 October 2024**. The venues are accessible to people with disabilities and can take measures to accommodate for any specific needs of participants in this respect. Please inform organisers and provide the necessary information in your application form.

The working language is **English** with simultaneous translation into and from Ukrainian provided on the needs basis.

### Security considerations

By applying to participate in this seminar, applicants from Ukraine acknowledge that they will be travelling within the territory of Ukraine and beyond. An appropriate insurance will be provided to all participants travelling from Ukraine by the Council of Europe, subject to the timely submission of the information requested by the Secretariat.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have questions or are in need of further information, please do not hesitate to contact Anna Aranzhii, Programme Officer of the Education, Training and Cooperation Division of the Council of Europe Youth Department: [anna.aranzhii@coe.int](mailto:anna.aranzhii@coe.int).

The focal point at the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine is [Nataliia Radchuk](#), Head of International Cooperation and European Integration Department ([natarad@ukr.net](mailto:natarad@ukr.net)).

If you are interested in other training courses for youth workers, youth leaders and trainers that the Youth Department organises click [this link](#) or the [Project in Ukraine](#) website.

## BACKGROUND

The long standing co-operation of the Council of Europe and the authorities responsible for youth in Ukraine has continued with a Framework Programme, and a technical assistance project [Youth for Democracy in Ukraine, a part of the Action Plan for Ukraine](#). It has helped Ukraine to develop a stronger and more inclusive youth policy for, by and with young people based on the values of human rights, democracy and rule of law. The outcomes of the co-operation with the Council of Europe Youth Sector laid the ground for Ukraine's reform efforts in view of its EU integration and has been recognised as relevant by the Ukrainian government, also when applying for the EU candidacy in 2022.

With the beginning of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Council of Europe adapted and expanded its approach to address the emerging needs of young people in the war and post-war periods. Stakeholders responsible for youth policy in Ukraine highlighted widespread issues of deterioration of well-being and mental health affecting young people of Ukraine. The Youth for Democracy in Ukraine project transformed its activities to respond to the needs of youth workers, youth centres and youth organisations and to support youth policy stakeholders in wartime, resulting in an educational programme based on the [Guide on Trauma Informed Youth Work](#).

In October 2023, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted [Resolution on "Mental health and mental well-being of children and young adults"](#), and invited member States to make efforts to empower young people and include them in decision-making processes, by taking their concerns seriously, and to consult children and young adults on decisions that affect their rights, mental health and well-being.

The results of the "U-report Ukraine" [survey](#) conducted in February 2023 and of [An international mental health survey](#) encompassing 11 countries that the mental health and well-being of young people, both inside and outside Ukraine, are significantly negatively affected by the consequences of the war. Respondents indicated that being with other people, exercising, taking part in a hobby, and travelling are important for self-care.

The roundtable entitled "Youth, Ukraine, Europe: Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction", in May 2024, opened a space for key youth policy stakeholders in Ukraine, including members of the Verkhovna Rada, to identify needs and actions towards developing inclusive youth policies and anchoring youth perspectives in decision-making processes in the context of Ukraine's recovery efforts. Building democratic societies calls for mainstreaming youth perspective as a cross-cutting issue in all areas, including Roma youth, young veterans and military/service personnel, indigenous people and national minorities, IDPs and refugees, LGBTQI+ youth, young people with disabilities, and young people in occupied and reoccupied territories in the context of the war.

A research project on young people's mental health and well-being, implemented in the framework of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership, will contribute to emergent expertise by analysing available support systems, and providing guidance for policy and practice. The preparation of a new training kit ([T-kit16](#)) on the well-being and mental health of young people is also underway.