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Information about and criteria for applications by youth organisations for activities to be held in co-operation with the European Youth Centres

As adopted by the Programming Committee on Youth
at its 55th meeting (30 June –1 July 2026)

The European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg and Budapest, were set up to support youth participation in Europe and to provide support - through education and training – to associative networks and projects interested in sharing the Council of Europe's principles and priorities in the youth field.

In addition to their own programme of education and training activities, the European Youth Centres carry out a yearly programme of study sessions and other activities held in co-operation with non-governmental and governmental youth partners. These activities reflect the principles of co-management and partnership with young people and their organisations that are at the heart of the youth policy of the Council of Europe and contribute to the implementation of the Youth for Democracy programme.

These activities - of which the most visible are the study sessions – are based on co-operation between the partner organisations and the Council of Europe's Youth Department. The programme is based on applications submitted twice a year and decided upon by the Programming Committee on Youth. The activities are globally financed by the budget of the youth sector of the Council of Europe (specific modalities are available at the Secretariat).

1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- a. European/International non-governmental youth organisations with partners or branches in at least 7 European countries;
- b. European formal or informal networks of youth organisations and other non-governmental youth structures bringing together partners from at least 7 European countries; networks are considered eligible if their members or affiliates share a common purpose and long-term aims and their commitment for cooperation clearly goes beyond a specific time, project or activity;
- c. Sub-regional networks of youth organisations and/or national youth councils and structures involved in youth work, from 4 to 6 neighbouring countries.

Applicants should be involved in areas of youth work relevant to the Council of Europe's youth policy and interested in contributing to the work priorities and principles of the Council of Europe's youth field.

2. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

A. *Study Sessions*

Study sessions are international educational youth seminars (meetings), lasting between four and eight days, which bring together multipliers active in youth organisations or networks to deepen the understanding, and prepare future action, about a specific subject of common interest and relevance to the priorities of the youth organisation(s) and of the Council of Europe Youth sector. They are organised in co-operation with youth organisations and networks, and are held at one of the European Youth Centres, in Strasbourg or Budapest.

A study session should combine pan-European approaches and perspectives with local/grassroots youth work experiences. The contents of study sessions filter down to the grassroots, as participants in a study session, mostly local leaders, act as multipliers towards their peers. The results of study sessions can be implemented and used by participants in their local realities, in addition to their contribution to the policies of the youth organisations and of the Council of Europe.

A typical study session brings together between 20 and 40 participants from 4 to 8 working days and can be held in 2 languages with simultaneous interpretation if required. The participants are recruited through the channels of the partner organisation(s) and the programme is prepared by an educational team composed by the partner organisation(s) with the participation of an educational advisor of the Council of Europe.

B. *Double Study Sessions*

Double study sessions have the same function as study sessions, with the following specifications:

- They are proposed and implemented by at least two applicant organisations;
- They bring together a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 70 participants, including the preparatory team;
- have a maximum duration of 5 working days (exceptions are possible, if justified);
- may benefit – when justified – from interpretation into three working languages.

C. *Symposia*

Symposia are activities addressing themes and matters of common concern and interest for both the governmental and non-governmental partners of the Youth Department. Symposia are aimed at knowledge production and contributing to the youth policy development of the Council of Europe and its governmental and non-governmental partners. Symposia are decided upon by and run under the supervision of the Programming Committee on Youth on the basis of the following guidelines:

- Applications may be submitted by 4 co-operating partners (unless directly decided by the Joint Council on Youth);

- The participants are recruited from the wide circle of governmental and non- governmental partners of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe;
- The secretariat and administration of symposia is secured by the Secretariat of the European Youth Centre. The recruitment of participants is made by the Secretariat; the selection of participants should be done together with the preparatory team;
- Symposia are prepared by a preparatory team comprising representatives of the applicants, the Secretariat and, where appropriate, representatives of the statutory bodies.

D. Special projects

Special projects are activities of an innovative character that fall outside the specific conditions of study sessions and symposia. Such projects should provide benefits for the organisation, network or youth structure concerned and have a wider application in the programme of the Youth Department. Consultation with the Secretariat of the Youth Department is recommended before applications are submitted.

3. NON-ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following activities are not eligible for support in co-operation with the European Youth Centre:

- activities dealing mainly with internal affairs of the organisation, such as statutory meetings, general assemblies, congresses, etc.;
- activities which are not related with the Council of Europe's work or priorities, and do not offer space to explore the Council of Europe's youth standards, approaches and resources.
- activities with a predominantly competitive character;
- activities that are part of a school or university programme;
- activities with uniquely a vocational training character;
- profit-making activities.

4. CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO ALL ACTIVITIES

All activities must:

- conform to the principles laid down in the Statutes of the Council of Europe and the European Youth Centre and, specifically, show a commitment to a European society respectful of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, cultural diversity and social cohesion, and the participation of young people
- aim to develop synergies and have a multiplying effect, on local, regional, national and/or European level
- relate to problems and concerns of young people and seek to involve young people as a resource
- be an experience in participation, planned intercultural learning and human rights education
- seek to contribute to achieving gender equality¹;
- secure gender neutrality² in the group of participants, except in the cases of single-sex youth organisations or networks and of activities that are specifically planned for single-sex groups and this is specifically explained and requested in the application form;
- involve participants residents from at least 8 member states of the Council of Europe
- strive to secure a balance of the geographical origin of participants among all the Contracting Parties to the European Cultural Convention;
- be documented and its results made available to a wider public
- be prepared, run and evaluated by a predominantly young international multicultural educational team in co-operation with the Centre's educational staff
- make good use of the European Youth Centre from an institutional and educational point of view.

Common quality standards

¹ Understood as "an equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life. Gender equality is the opposite of gender inequality, not of gender difference, and aims to promote the full participation of women and men in society (...)" ([Council of Europe Gender Equality Glossary](#)).

² a gender-neutral approach ensures that no ground for discrimination is created on the basis of social roles, sex or gender (see [Gender impact assessment](#) of the programme Youth for Democracy).

All activities, regardless of the format, are expected to conform with the [Quality standards in education and training activities](#) of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

5. SPECIFIC CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO STUDY SESSIONS

- a. study sessions must address an issue of contemporary European societies from the point of view of young people, or matters affecting young people and their organisations across the member states of the Council of Europe
- b. study sessions should provide an input to, or benefit from the programme of work priorities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, and are complementary in terms of the theme, approach or target groups to the rest of its programme of activities
- c. the theme and purpose of the study session is proposed and developed by the applying organisation/s and should contribute to development of the work priorities of the Council of Europe's youth sector
- d. study sessions must have aims and objectives that can be pursued or attained in one activity or session. Applications for study sessions comprising multiple activities over one or several years will not be accepted unless they are part of special projects.
- e. the programme of the study sessions should be organised so as to enable participatory approaches in learning based on non-formal education principles and methodologies
- f. study sessions must have a minimum duration of 4 working days and a maximum of 8 working days – exceptions to the maximum duration may be granted if justified in the application
- g. study sessions must bring together a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 40 participants, including the preparatory team (with the exception of double study sessions)
- h. participants coming from one country must not exceed 20% of the total number of participants. Up to 15% of all participants may come from non-member countries.
- i. the majority of participants must be under 30 years of age – with a maximum of 25% over the age of 30
- j. the participants must be able to act as multipliers and contribute to the follow-up of the activity within their own context and organisation. The recruitment of the participants is the sole responsibility of the partner organisation/s
- k. the programme of the study session and the methodology must be prepared and implemented by a predominantly young multicultural team of facilitators or trainers provided by the partner organisation and by an educational advisor provided by the Council of Europe
- l. the preparatory team – including the educational advisor of the Council of Europe- must meet at least once at the latest eight weeks before the beginning of the study session
- m. study sessions may normally be held in two working languages with simultaneous interpretation. Exceptions to this rule are possible when justified in the application and accepted by the Programming Committee
- n. the partner organisations must produce a report of the activity and make it available within 2 months after the end of the session.

Prioritisation of applications

In the selection of applications for study sessions the Programming Committee will give priority for activities that:

- a. promise to be innovative in terms of method, approach, target group or intellectual output
- b. are the result of collaboration between two or more applicants
- c. can most benefit from the Centre's institutional and educational support
- d. reach target groups / young people who could not so far benefit from or have been less involved in the activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

Priority cannot be given to applications submitted by organisations that have not provided an activity report of their last study session, have not provided a satisfactory activity and financial report on grants received from the European Youth Foundation (EYF) or have not reimbursed to the EYF any outstanding sums due.

ASSESSMENT AND DECISIONS ON THE APPLICATIONS

All applications received are first assessed by the Secretariat of the Youth Department on the grounds of:

- a) Eligibility of the applying organisation(s)
- b) Conformity with the formal criteria for the activities (e.g. duration, number of participants, countries of origin...)
- c) The educational/quality criteria related to the purpose, programme and process implementation of the activity
- d) The criteria for prioritisation.

NB: The non-conformity of an application with any of the criteria in a) and b) automatically disqualifies it.

The assessments of the secretariat are communicated to, and discussed by the Programming Committee on Youth, a co-managed body composed of 8 governmental and 8 non-governmental members of the Joint Council on Youth.

The Programming Committee on Youth takes the final decisions on eligible applications, prioritises the ones to be accepted in the programme and issues specific recommendations to the applicants. The Programming Committee on Youth may also place some applications on reserve list or invite applicants to re-submit their application.

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

There are two yearly calls for applications for activities with deadlines on:

- **15 April**, for activities planned for January-June of the following year
- **15 October**, for activities planned for July-December of the following year.

The calls are announced in the Internet site of the Youth Department (www.coe.int/youth) in the 4 weeks preceding the deadline.

7. SUPPORT TO NEW APPLICANTS

Organisations interested in applying and having no experience of organising study sessions in cooperation with the European Youth Centres, may seek further information and advice from the educational staff of the Youth Department: eyc.study_sessions@coe.int.