



Tuesday, 5 May 2020

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH

English only

Europe Day

On Europe Day, the Advisory Council on Youth celebrates the anniversary of the founding of the Council of Europe and welcomes the continuous efforts of the Council of Europe's member states to adhere to the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and to provide multilateral solutions from which citizens across the continent can benefit.

Currently, however, some of these efforts are being put to the test due to the COVID-19 crisis as we witness violations of human rights and various challenges to democracy. The Advisory Council on Youth firmly believes human rights must not be quarantined during hardships. This is why **we invite member states to apply the human rights-based approach to tackle the crisis**. The Advisory Council has issued a [statement on COVID-19 and young people](#), in which we outline the challenges and threats to young people's rights in the current situation and invited the member states to uphold the values of human rights, democracy, and rule of law. We invite you to read it [here](#).

“Human rights must not be quarantined during hardships.”

Furthermore, on this day, the Advisory Council on Youth is celebrating the Council of Europe's recognition of the crucial role that young people play in upholding and advancing democracy rooted in human rights and the rule of law, and its efforts to empower young people to claim and exercise their rights. Nonetheless, young people mostly still do not have access to democratic decision-making processes on issues of direct concern to them and struggle to make their voices heard on various platforms.

The Advisory Council on Youth calls on its member states to **intensify efforts to include young people in decision-making processes and address their challenges systematically, inclusively and intersectionally**. Only this can eventually bring about a Europe of functioning democracies and rule of law, and respect for human rights and solidarity. It is when young people directly partake in democratic decision-making processes that we feel more responsibility for Europe and celebrate it as a place of belonging. With regard to this, the Advisory Council endorses [the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#) as a tool to promote young people's meaningful contribution to the democratic system.

“Youth are not only the future of Europe; they are an essential part of who and what Europe was, is and will be.”

The Advisory Council on Youth especially celebrates the **Council of Europe putting youth at the top of its agenda**. Ever since the youth sector of the Council of Europe was established in 1972, young people have had the opportunity to be part of capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and peace-building activities which contribute to promoting European citizenship and European values. On Europe Day, **the Advisory Council on Youth reminds everyone that youth are not only the future of Europe, but they are an essential part of who and what Europe was, is and will be.**

The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the Advisory Council on Youth and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe or its member states.