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Youth Peace Camp 2025

Engaging young people and youth organisations from conflict-stricken regions in dialogue and conflict transformation

30 June – 9 July 2025

(including arrival and departure)

European Youth Centre
Strasbourg, France

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

Deadline for applications:
Sunday **13 April**, 23:59 CET

The Youth Peace Camp is organised by the Council of Europe Youth Department with the support of the Directorate of Political Affairs and External Relations and of the Cyprus Youth Board.

Background

The Youth Peace Camp is the flagship activity of the Council of Europe youth sector on promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies. The Youth Peace Camp project was born in 2003 in the framework the programme of the Council of Europe's confidence-building measures and has been providing a unique opportunity for young people from conflict-stricken regions to meet and understand the process of transforming conflicts.

During the camp the participants follow an experiential learning process and acquired competences in the fields of peacebuilding, intercultural learning, dialogue and conflict transformation, within a human rights framework.

The Youth Peace Camp unique approach is the possibility for young people to better understand conflicts and their transformation by listening to and living together with young people affected by other conflicts elsewhere. The European Youth Centre provides an adequate and safe environment for the young people from different conflict-stricken regions to learn together about conflict, to share their experiences in approaching them with other young people, to engage in dialogue process and to build their capacity to develop future conflict transformation projects and initiatives.

In 2022, the Youth Peace Camp was replaced by the Youth Peace Camp Conference, held in the framework of the Youth Action Week – Democracy Now!. The Call for Action prepared bythe participants of the Week has a chapter with various expectations, including that, "the Council of Europe and its member States must commit firmly to and advocate for action to address all conflicts through peacebuilding and non-violent conflict transformation". The participants also underlined the close interconnection between democracy and non-violent resolution of conflicts.

In 2023 and 2024, the Youth Peace Camp was again organised as a standalone activity and brought participants from 9 communities who increased their competences in the role of multipliers and peer leaders in implementing peace-building activities with young people in their communities.

Rationale of the Youth Peace Camp

Young people growing up in regions affected by armed conflicts, being exposed to and/or enduring the consequences of physical, cultural and structural violence, are often confronted with dramatic life forming experiences, emotions and challenges. Such experiences may strongly influence their views and behaviour towards their own and other communities, their relation to conflict and peace and to their identity. Many young people choose to engage in constructive initiatives and dialogue instead of becoming themselves multipliers of hatred, violence, and discrimination. When supported and recognised in their role, these young people may become peer leaders and educators and, in turn, raise awareness of and involve other young people in dialogue, mediation, conflict transformation and peace work projects.

In their role as peer leaders and in learning about conflict and peace, it is important for them to be able to relate to and to be confronted with, the life stories, experiences, and aspirations of young people from other conflict regions. The Youth Peace Camp builds on these experiences and applies it to its participants.

Learning about peace, violence and its root-causes at the Youth Peace Camp is organised in line with the approaches of human rights education and intercultural learning. Intercultural learning became understood as representing the essence of the Youth Department's educational approach: recognising and addressing prejudice, combating aggressive and exclusive forms of nationalism, identifying the competences necessary for youth workers active in inter/multi-cultural environments. Intercultural learning is understood to be a natural part of the educational approach

towards intercultural dialogue and, together with human rights education, provides useful approaches to some of the dilemmas resulting from violent, structural and cultural conflicts.

Attention to peace, intercultural dialogue, violence prevention and conflict transformation is deeply rooted in the history of the youth sector and remains a top priority by the persistence of several "frozen" and active conflicts. The ongoing war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and recent events in Israel and Palestine have been a brutal reminder of the devastating impact of war and conflict on the culture of human rights that supports peaceful and inclusive societies.

The adoption by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of the Resolution on Strengthening the role of young people in the prevention and resolution of conflicts (Resolution2378 (2021) confirmed the political relevance of these approaches, adding to their proven educational suitability. The Resolution calls upon regarding young people and youth organisations as indispensable partners in any peace or political processes, as well as to foster continuous intercommunity dialogue and co-operation among young people from different communities, and to introduce democratic citizenship and peace education into the formal school curriculum from an early age.

The attention placed on young people and youth organisations reflects also the orientations of the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security regarding Participation, Protection, Prevention, Partnerships, Disengagement and Reintegration.

In 2024 **the Joint Council on Youth**, at its 51st meeting, decided to establish a working group to draft a Committee of Ministers recommendation addressed to governments of member states on peace education in non-formal education and youth work. The working group should carry out its work within the parameters outlined in the **Feasibility Study**, with any adjustments deemed necessary by the group, notably to reflect the approaches and role of the youth sector in human rights education and peacebuilding including the experiences and perspectives of the Youth Peace Camp participants.

The Youth Peace Camp enables the youth sector of the Council of Europe to identify and document challenges faced by young people in conflict regions and to improve its ability to support youth projects in those regions.

The activity is organised in cooperation with Directorate of Political Affairs and External Relations (DPAER) of the Council of Europe in the framework of its Confidence Building Measures.

The 2025 Youth Peace Camp

In 2025, the camp should bring together groups of young people from the following regions: Bosnian and Herzegovina, Cyprus (Greek-speaking Cypriots and Turkish-speaking Cypriots), Kosovo* (with a focus on Albanian-speaking and Serbian-speaking communities), South Caucasus (in particular from border regions and ethnic minorities), and from both banks of the river Nistru/Dniestr. Each group should include an average of 5-6 young people.

** 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.*

Aims and objectives

The Youth Peace Camp engages young people and youth organisations from conflict affected regions in dialogue and peacebuilding activities based on human rights education and intercultural learning during and after the camp.

The objectives of the 2025 Youth Peace Camp are:

- To develop awareness and basic competences (knowledge, skills and attitude) of participants in human rights education, peacebuilding and intercultural learning to enable them to engage in dialogue and confidence-building initiatives with other young people affected by conflict;
- To support mutual learning from experiences of conflict and coping strategies;
- To foster relationship building as a foundation for peacebuilding and dialogue;
- To introduce and share existing youth work practices and experiences of young people working on dialogue and conflict transformation in their home communities;
- To motivate and support participants in their role as multipliers and peer leaders in peacebuilding activities with young people encouraging them to implement follow-up initiatives;
- To strengthen the role of the Council of Europe, in particular through its Youth for Democracy programme, in peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue with young people and to support the approaches of the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Methodology

The programme of the peace camp will be based on mutual learning situations among participants, making use of a variety of working methods. The participants will be able to share personal experiences with conflict and violence and share the coping strategies they developed. The programme will also allow time for participants to explore the relation between identity and the conflict in their region for young people and themselves. Personal reflections and sharing within community groups will be alternated with sharing, learning and reflecting between youth from the different conflict regions.

Central to the concept of the Youth Peace Camp is the motivation and the possibility for living, learning and discussing together with other young people with whom otherwise it may be very difficult to have contacts or cooperation.

A team of experienced trainers and facilitators will prepare and facilitate the programme. They have direct experience of the regions from where participants come and will be able to communicate with participants in their mother tongue.

The participants will be invited to implement their initiatives for peace building, with the support and guidance of the facilitators, to share their experience with their peers and promote the values and approaches of the Youth Peace Camp.

A series of educational resources and manuals of the Council of Europe will be the basis of programme design and implementation in the field of peace education, dialogue and conflict transformation activities, including:

- Compass and Compasito, the manuals for human rights education with young peopleand with children;

- Youth Transforming Conflict – a training kit published by the youth partnershipbetween the European Commission and the Council of Europe;
- The Education Pack All Different-All Equal.

Towards the end of the camp, participants are expected to develop initiatives as peer leaders and multipliers with other young people in the field of dialogue and conflict transformation, in their home communities. The Council of Europe is committed to motivate and encourage such initiatives and would also offer institutional, educational and, where possible, financial support for the follow up initiatives of participants after the camp in 2025-2026. Therefore, the preparation of meaningful and realistic follow up plans by the participants has utmost importance this year.

The Youth Peace Camp started as a camp with participants living in tents and doing also outdoor activities. Nowadays the activity is mostly held indoors at the European Youth Centre,where the participants are also accommodated. The spirit of a camp remains present in the activity though the extensive usage of non-formal education methods, the experience of livingand learning together and, to the extent of the possible, the usage of outdoor activities.

Youth Peace Camp Community

In 2025, the Council of Europe launched the Youth Peace Camp Community.

The aim of the community is to foster long-term engagement, collaboration and capacity-building among generations of the Youth Peace Camp by creating an online space that supports networking, capacity-building and follow-up actions, and promotes best practices, thereby maximising the impact of participant's capacities and ensuring sustainability of the Youth Peace Camp's outcomes.

All participants of the 2025 edition of the Youth Peace Camp will be invited to join the Youth Peace Camp Community to support networking and sharing among youth multipliers and the most importantly to support new alumni in implementing their follow-up initiatives.

Working language

The working language of the programme will be English. Participants must have sufficient understanding of English to comprehend and complete the application form without assistance from another person or digital assistance tools and to fully and actively take part in the programme.

Profile of participants

In 2025, the camp will bring together groups of young people from:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Cyprus (Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking young people)
- Kosovo*, with a focus on Albanian-speaking and Serbian-speaking communities,
- South Caucasus, in particular from conflict-affected regions and ethnic communities
- Both banks of the river Nistru/Dniestr

All participants must:

- be aged between 18 and 25 years (with possible exceptions up to 30 years old);
- be able to work in English;
- be available and fully committed to take part in the Youth Peace Camp (1-8 July working days);
- be curious, open-minded, appreciate diversity and ready to learn about each other's realities;

- be motivated to learn and to apply the values and approaches of the Peace Camp, notably human rights, democracy and peacebuilding;
- be motivated to implement youth initiatives for peacebuilding following the camp;
- possess a sense of responsibility for one's own actions, a commitment to personal and community development and continue the engagement with other participants;
- preferably be involved in an organisation or network, institution, formal and/or informal group that is ready to support them throughout the project duration and afterwards when implementing youth initiatives for peace building.

The group of participants should be balanced and reflect the diversity of their communities. The total number of participants and facilitators expected will be 50-60, with an average of 5-6 persons from each community present.

The Council of Europe (and partners) 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.

Financial and practical conditions

Dates: Participants are expected to arrive on 30 June to the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg and to depart on 9 July.

Travel expenses: Travel expenses and visa fees for accessing Strasbourg will be reimbursed according to the rules of the Council of Europe. Only the participants who attend the entire Youth Peace Camp can be reimbursed.

Accommodation: Full board and lodging for the Youth Peace Camp will be provided and paid for by the Council of Europe at the European Youth Centre. The European Youth Centre is accessible to people with disabilities and can take measures to accommodate for any specific needs of participants in this respect. Please provide all the necessary information in your application form.

Application procedure and selection of participants

Applications must be submitted by **Sunday, 13 April 2025, 23:59 CET** by completing the online application form available at: https://forms.office.com/e/eZ6gXgqJgi

Further inquiries

For more information about the activity and for technical assistance, please address: eyc.programme@coe.int