

Outsmart Disinformation, Protect Free Speech

A Council of Europe Hackathon

Satellite Event at the European Youth Centre Budapest

20 June 2025

Background

Online disinformation and manipulation are among the most pressing threats to democracy today. Despite significant efforts at national and European levels, the evolving nature of this challenge demands fresh thinking, innovative ideas, and collaborative action.

The Hackathon

Under its [New Democratic Pact](#), launched by [Secretary General Alain Berset](#), the Council of Europe has decided to organise a [Hackathon](#) which will be held on **20 June at its Headquarters in the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg**.

Teams of young people from our member states will search for creative solutions, with help from prominent experts in the field. It will be an opportunity for large-scale collective brainstorming.

The EYCB Satellite Event

In parallel with and connected to the Hackathon in Strasbourg, the European Youth Centre Budapest is organising a satellite event. This event, while not formally part of the Hackathon, will nonetheless connect to the main event in several points and its outcomes will inform the collective brainstorming as well.

We are now calling on interested participants to be part of this satellite event and thus of the larger collective brainstorming on the challenges posed by disinformation to our democracies and the on the possible solutions to fight back while protecting free speech and expression in line with the core values of the Council of Europe.

DRAFT Programme

- 09:00 Welcome and opening address by **Alain Berset**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- 09:10 Keynote Speeches by
- ▶ **Theodoros Rousopoulos**, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
 - ▶ **Danela Arsovska**, Mayor of Skopje, Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Spokesperson on Ethics and prevention of corruption
 - ▶ **Gill Phillips**, Co-editor of McNae's Essential Law for Journalists
- 09:30 Welcome by **Balint Molnar**, Executive Director, European Youth Centre Budapest
- 09:45 Introduction to the day's programme by the facilitators (icebreakers, get to know each other, etc.)
- 10:00 **First Roundtable & QA: Disinformation and Its Challenge to Democracy**
Panelists: **Péter Krekó**, Executive Director, Political Capital; **Gábor Polyák**, Research Director, Mérték Media Monitor; **Raluca Radu**, Professor at the Department of Journalism, Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies, University of Bucharest
- 11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:30 **Second Roundtable & QA: How to fight Disinformation – Lessons from Europe and the World**
Panelists: **Krisztina Nagy**, Founder, Idea Foundation; **Szilárd Teczár**, Editor-in-Chief, Lakmusz; **TBC**, European Parliament Spokesperson's Unit
- 12:30 Lunch
- 14:30 **Working Groups** – Joint brainstorming on tools and methods to combat the destructive effects of disinformation on democracy. Proposals for pilot projects.

16:00	Coffee Break
16:30	Working Groups – Joint brainstorming on tools and methods to combat the destructive effects of disinformation on democracy. Proposals for pilot projects.
18:15	Presentation of proposals to the Hackathon in Strasbourg (Online connection to Strasbourg)
18:30	Conclusions and wrap up
19:00	Dinner Reception
20:30	Social event (games, concert, DJ, etc.)
21 :30	Winners' announcement and closing remarks by Alain Berset, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Online connection to Strasbourg)
22:00	Social event cont'd (Club Room)