

Info session on the Call ad hoc youth initiatives Living and building democracy 2026 (2026.C3.C)- Transcript of the meeting

11 August 2026

GEORGESCU Mara

I will also explain why we are happy to have you here and why we are happy to have this call launched now and then we will move on with the information specifically to the call.

The European Youth Foundation, being part of the Council of Europe, has had the idea of democracy, human rights, rule of law at its heart since the beginning. We support projects at different levels, from local to international, that respond to young people's challenges today. In a way, we are in between the needs, dreams of young people and the institution we are part of, and of course, the Council of Europe as such, it's all about democracy, human rights and the rule of law and creating a continent where these values are daily realities. In this spirit, at the moment, the Council of Europe is in a process of developing and launching what we call a New Democratic Pact for Europe.

This has been an initiative on the make and it's still in the make, but the idea is really to create something new where member states, people, citizens and non-citizens as well, people on the territories of our member states, can re-engage with democracy and can revitalise it in ways that they see fit for their own context.

This comes in a context which is not positive at the moment with many challenges. I will just mention a few and I'm mentioning them, so that you think about this call as potential answers to these challenges. This list is by no means exhaustive in any sense. Some of the issues identified as big problems in many member states and many communities are issues to do with, for example, disengagement of people from democratic processes. I mean, you would see here, maybe people don't go to vote because they don't feel represented or engaged to do so, or maybe they don't know why they should do it.

Another issue is around media literacy and how, for example, young people can recognise and can critically respond to misleading content generated by AI. This is a reality today in many countries.

Another issue is the lack of dialogue and polarisation in societies. How can polarised societies still find a way where we can live together peacefully and we can decide together peacefully how public policies look like and how institutions should function?

Other issues are around lack of trust in institutions and also the way these institutions function, issues around corruption, for example, or disinformation. But also, let's not leave it at the end of the list, issues around how economic inequality affects how people engage in democracies.

All of these are issues are observed by our institution, by different colleagues in the Council of Europe, and led also to think that there is a need for a re-engagement with democracy and democratic processes. Democracy is a process, and as such, there could be innovation in how democracy is experienced and developed.

I invite you to consult the website of the New Democratic Pact for Europe. The Pact focuses on three areas. It's all about learning and practising democracy, where you would say your role as organisations working in educational contexts, for example, or having an educational function towards young people, you are quite important, if not essential. Learning and practising democracy is a strand of the Pact.

Another one is around protecting democracy. We look into how to deal with disinformation, how do we deal with corruption in democracies? How do we deal with trust between citizens and institutions?

And then we also have a strand around innovation, which is not an empty word. Democracy is a system that can develop. The question is, how can we practise democracy maybe in different ways? What other deliberations can be put into place in different contexts and so on?

These strands can provide some inspiration when you think of your proposals to this call.

Think of your proposals as creating good examples that other organisations in other contexts can use and adapt. You will maybe try something new in your work, but others then will benefit, because through us, your practice will also reach others. What is really a key aspect for us is that you think how through the proposal you can develop critical thinking of young people in relation to democracy. Think about this aspect of what can or should young people learn around democracy and democratic engagement? What aspects do you think or do they think, even more importantly, that would help them to critically engage? We don't look at democracy as a this theory that needs to be believed, like a belief or a religion, but really as a process

where we can still understand each other and put together societies that live in peace.

I invite you to look at the New Democratic Pact and have a look also at the challenges there, and then critically engage contextualising all of this in your territory or with the young people you work with.

We expect quite a lot of answers to this call and quite a lot of proposals, and that makes us very happy. On one hand, because we think if there are a lot of answers, there is a relevance to the topic, but also because there is a lot of interest from organisations like yours to do something, to change something, to push systems and people to rethink their way of living and engaging in society.

So, thank you so much, and I give back the floor to Samir now.

HECO Samir

Thank you for the introduction. We will now present the call.

First, some general information, as you probably know that the Council of Europe is the oldest intergovernmental organisation in Europe, established in 1949 and based in Strasbourg, France, with the mission to promote democracy, human rights, and rule of law across Europe and beyond. What is here important is to mention that organisations in all our 46 member states can apply for this call.

The mission and the aim of the Foundation is to promote youth cooperation in Europe by providing financial support to such European youth activities that serve the promotion of peace, understanding and cooperation between the people of Europe and of the world in a spirit of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Indeed, the European Youth Foundation provides partnership and financial support for youth organisations from the 46 member states of the Council of Europe for their operations and for youth-led projects and international cooperation activities for youth organisations for young people to promote democracy, human rights and multiply our values.

The European Youth Foundation is part of the Council of Europe's Youth Department and it has been established in 1972 with approximately 4 million euro budget per year and is based in Strasbourg.

So, let's see how the process of being able for one organisation to apply for EYF funding. First of all, each organisation has to be registered within the EYF, and then we have opened a new platform support4youth.coe.int where all applications

regarding the calls are to be submitted. First, organisations, if they are not already registered with the EYF, have to request the registration, which might take up to two weeks.

Once the organisations are approved, then they can then they can apply to the calls that are open, and of course they can apply to this call.

The Secretariat does the technical assessment of all applications received, and the decision on which projects are financed by the EYF is taken by the Programming Committee on Youth, which is a co-managed committee, involving 8 representatives of member states and 8 representatives of youth organisations.

The initiatives that can be supported are awareness raising and educational initiatives grounded in human rights education and education for democratic citizenship, with a strong focus on strengthening critical thinking of young people and fostering their participation in democratic processes and civic life within a European context of erosion of democracy. The initiatives must have an educational dimension as well as a youth engagement dimension. In other words, initiatives have to bring this human right education and education for democratic citizenship dimension, where participants learn about human rights, where they learn how they can be involved in democracy, for example. In addition, initiatives must support and empower young people to engage actively in democratic processes, youth organisations, etc.

Another crucial element of this goal is the need for projects to have an impact on young people and their local communities.

The main aim is to support youth initiatives that empower young people to learn about and actively engage in democracy and human rights. And there are three different objectives, which are to create space for young people to learn more about democracy and the role of human rights in relation to specific challenges to democracies in the current European context. The second objective: allow young people to develop their attitudes, views and specifically their critical thinking for building a democratic culture including when using the digital space. And the third objective is about equipping young people with citizenship skills and ways to take active part in democratic processes and human rights promotion.

Who can apply to those to this call? Organisation that are, as I said already, registered in the granting in the granting system of the EYF as local or national youth organisations. The organisations that are not yet registered, there is still time.

Another element is that partners in these projects are not mandatory. Of course, if

you envisage and already have some partners, you can involve them. But having a partner is not mandatory for this call.

Regarding the participants, the target is young people, at least 75% of participants of your project have to be up to 30 years old, they have to reside in at least one of Council of Europe member states. And of course, if it is really justified, you can also, your project can also invite participants from other countries. But as I said, this is mainly for local and national organisations with a real impact on local contexts.

The duration of the projects, the projects can start as of 20 November and latest by 31 December. The project duration, maximum project duration is 6 months, which means that the last date of the implementation of the project can be the 30 June 2027. Regarding the reporting, there is always two months period after the end of date. The maximum date, the date for submitting the reporting can be 30 August 2027.

We would really like to advise you to use different resources when drafting your project, but not only when drafting, but also when implementing, such as the Compass, the European Charter on Participation of Young People in Local Regional Life, and all other Council of Europe resources specific to the youth sector.

Regarding the budget, the maximum grant is 8000 EUR per project. You need to show some level of co-funding, which can also be in-kind.

Let's take some questions now. I see there is one question in the chat. Is it possible to subcontract some activities? We will look into this later in the call.

Is there a minimum number of participants required? No, there are no minimum.

Since the grant amount is quite small, does it mean that it can be just one activity, for example, one training? Yes, regarding the proposal format, what is important to mention is that your project has to make sense. Whatever you propose, meetings or something like this, it's really up to you, but it has to be, it has to make sense and to be relevant to the call objectives, based on specific needs, etc.

Can an international organisation apply for the call? The call is for local and national organisations only. It's open only for these types of organisations. If you work with different organisations in different countries and they are themselves youth

organisations, they could register themselves in our database and also apply directly themselves. You could, as a European-based structure, maybe help them to apply, help them with the procedure, but they can also themselves register. What is important for us and why this call is really for local and national organisations is that we want to contextualise these challenges of democracies. This is really in a given context, be it a village, be it a country, trying to work together directly with young people on democracies.

If I choose to have partners, do they need to sign an agreement with the organisation regarding the project? The EYF does not ask for such an agreement.

Is there eligibility criteria with regards to organisations, financial capacity, duration of formal registration, previous experience? No, the eligibility criteria are indicated in the call.

We are planning workshops for 15 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in France, focusing on human rights, human's rights and disinformation. They will create a short film to be broadcast on French TV around 8 March, then help lead discussions about it on social media. Can you confirm that this project fits within the scope? Yes, such initiatives can be in the scope of the call.

Is it possible to submit a project held in public schools during school hours? We are not a public school, but an independent NGO. I suppose this means you would go and intervene during the classes of typically would be civic education or something like this, I assume. Yes, this is possible. However, this should be outside the school curriculum, and include non-formal education approaches.

Is there a percentage of co-funding necessary? There is no percentage of co-funding necessary. As said, the contributions can be in-kind contributions from the organisation, like voluntary work. If someone gives you for free the room for the meetings or contributions from a donor.

Our core idea is to bring youth health problems into practical exercises, how it relates to democracy and human rights. Is that too specific for the scope of the call? It can

be meaningfully explored, just pay attention to the call objectives, and how health links to them.

Okay, so let us go now through the application form for this call. What is needed is the information about the contact person for the project, its title, but also where the project will be implemented with the country and venue, which means city, village, town or whatever. As said before, the dates are really important and the projects have to start from 20 November to 31 December 2026. And the end date of the project can be, is six months after the start date of your project, with the maximum, with the latest end date being 30 of June of 2027.

You then have to indicate the overview of your proposal. There are guiding questions where we want you to explain the relevance of your project regarding this call, what will happen, what are the needs that your project is going to tackle for younger people, and why your organisation is proposing these initiatives. You also need to explain the relevance of your proposal to the Council of Europe priorities and the objectives of this call.

Then, we ask about the aim and objectives, where we would like you to present the results that your initiative will achieve towards the young people, their communities, their organisations. If you have some outputs, it would be good to explain us what the outputs of the initiative are here. And here there is a list of some outputs, which is not extensive, that can be your publication, website, podcast, video.

Then you need to present your activities from beginning to the end of your project. It's really important to describe the flow of different activities that are going to happen within your project. We would also like to have the outline programme of the main activities, so we identify the topics you tackle, as well as how you will run your activities, what value-based considerations you will have.

Another important element of the project proposal is the team. Of course, when you start the project, you might not know exactly the names of the relevant people. If you have them, of course, it's always good to mention. If you already know who will be your trainers, who will be your facilitators, it is really good to mention it here, but also to explain their expertise. And if you do not know them, present the profiles of people that you are looking for in order to implement your project. It is also

important in the team to mention who will be responsible for the financial management and the reporting of the grant to us.

Then there is a section on partners. As said before, it is not mandatory to have partners within this call. If you have already identified some partners, you can add information here.

Finally, the information on participants. We would like to know where they come from and the number of participants. But what is most important is the age range of participants. As mentioned earlier, 75% of total participants have to be aged under 30 years. You will also present the profile of participants and how you will recruit them.

Let's then take more questions.

Do we need to run the project in English or in our language ? What we are really looking is the impact on local contexts. So of course, the use of local languages or national languages is needed. There is no need for us to have translation into English for your participants. In case you are thinking of creating some output or a resource, or I don't know, this can be a leaflet, a website, you can develop this in your language. The only way you need to use English or French is when you report to us.

When we ask about the country of participants, what should we put if we work with migrants? It is the country where they reside.

Is it better to focus on one specific narrower topic rather than trying to cover several topics encompassed by democracy? I think it is really good to focus on specific topics rather than covering everything about democracy. However, since the grant amount is limited, and also the project duration, you need to be focused. What is the most important is that your project really makes sense. It is complete and really makes sense from the beginning to the end of the implementation period.

Ok, let's then discuss how you can prepare a proposal budget.

LERCH Katalin

What we would like to ask you to check before applying is the guide to the EYF grants, which is also available on our website. The guide contains a part about preparing a budget.

I will now show you how to apply and report by type of expenditure. For example, local travel cost, we give you the definition and then you find information about what you need to do when applying and then when reporting. When applying, the applicant must indicate the cost for a simple project and when reporting, the grantee organisation will be reimbursed on the basis of cost documents to provide invoice from providers of local tickets.

About travel costs, I would say that for your grant, for your project, it's most probably it's only domestic travel costs. So for example, if you have an activity, I'm going to show the travel, the table of unit rates applied for the calculation of travel expenses. So you may use, depending on your country, depending on the venue, you may use just the first two, three lines of this table, not more.

When you apply, you have the domestic travel for a prep meeting, if you have any domestic travel for any main event, if you have any follow-up event, if you have any local transportation which means transport which occurs during an event. If you have a meeting and you move your participants from one destination to another for a project visit, then this is what we consider as local transportation. So here you have to put the number of units, average cost per unit. This is mostly for, but I'm saying again, it's mostly for bigger events and international meetings, but the logic is very much the same.

And here I will show estimated amount of co-funding, because as Samir said, there is no limit of co-funding, so no minimum limit. But we need to see the total picture of your projects. You may have a bigger project where EYF fund only a part of the project. And here, this is the place in the budget where you have to put the estimated amount of co-funding from other sources. This is really an estimated amount and you can indicate it, as we would like to see the complete picture of your project.

And this is the participant list, what you have to fill in if you get the grant, but it is quite straightforward.

Accommodation and meals, if you have accommodation and meals, it's the very same logic like I showed you before. This is the screen of the budget application in the new system. You can put per person, per day, number of units, average cost. and then it will be automatically calculated. And then if you have any co-funding, then you have to put the co-funding here.

Human resources, there are two cost categories, subcategories, salaries, these are staff members employed by your NGO. This is the first category and then this is another category, fees of trainers, external experts, interpreters or consultants. Usually, they have only a short-term expert contract dedicated to specific tasks in the project. Let's see how you put it in the budget form. So if you have any staff member with a salary, you need to calculate the number of days dedicated to the project, if this if this staff member has a monthly gross salary, then you divide it by the days of the month, and then you multiply it how many days this employee dedicates to the project.

And then here again, if you have co-funding on this line, you have to put it here. And then external service providers, trainers, you just specify how much you pay them per day and how many days you pay them, and the system will calculate the total cost.

Equipment and supplies, this is quite straightforward again, purchase of office supplies, material or rental of other equipment which are needed for the project. This cost category also includes the purchase of the low value items, for example, chargers, laser pointers, small microphones with a maximum total value of 300 euro per grant. And this is the screen with the same logic, average cost per unit, number of units, and then it's calculated by the system. Here again, if you have co-funding in this, post category, please put the co-funding here.

Supplementary expenditure and services like meeting room rental, like technical production of project outputs like visibility and communication. You can choose the unit per day or per output or per activity or per action. You will see which fits you most and then it will be calculated. And again, you can put co-funding here.

Let's check the multiplier activities. They are explained in our guide. For the multiplier activities, we require of small contracts with multipliers and then in the contract you have to put the task of which will be delivered by the multiplier and also the results of this multiplier activity and how much you are pay to this multiplier. However, since the grant is up to 8000 euro, it is likely you will have very few such actions, if any.

We turn now to the indirect eligible costs. When you when you will reach the bottom of the budget application, the indirect eligible cost will be automatically calculated as 7% extra to the direct eligible costs. For this, you don't need to submit us any receipts or anything, any proof of payments when you will report on your grant. These are indirect eligible cost, this cost category may include costs related to the office, accountant, or any other costs which are not direct in the budget application.

And then you will have the subtotal of your direct eligible costs. So all the costs what you put in the budget form and this indirect eligible cost will be calculated and you have the total, the total co-funding will be also calculated by the system.

In the co-funding self declaration, you need to explain more about the sources of co-funding.

I will say a few words about procurement. You must follow the national legislation. Before signing a contract with suppliers, it's important for you to seek the best deal, the best value for money. You could ask several suppliers for an offer. It's just a general principle, but what we would like you to consider that you have to search for the best deal and best value for money.

And just one last thing that you have to make sure that if you got the grant from us, then you have to keep all your documentations for 10 years available in case of audit.

As for instalments of the grant, the first instalment will be 80%, which will be payable upon signature of the grant agreement. And the remaining 20% is payable upon the EYF approval of the final report, both the narrative and the financial report.

Let's now answer questions.

Are there limits for the staff salaries in the project? No, there are no limits. The project needs to make sense and the cost needs to make sense.

Can we include unpredicted costs? I am not sure what you mean, but what you need to do when applying is to make an estimation of all the costs.

HECO Samir

I will explain how you apply for this call.

If your organisation has not been registered already in the old system, in the old EYF system, you need to create your registration in our new platform, support4youth.coe.int

You will receive an e-mail once you register your personal information. You will receive an e-mail to set password. Once you set the password, then you will be able to sign in the platform and to fill in the new organisation registration form. Your request will be dealt by our team.

If the organisation has already been registered in the old system, so then your organisation, the legal representatives have received an e-mail on the steps to follow in order to migrate to the new platform. And really please follow those instructions because those are the ones that will help your organisation to connect to the new platform and then to apply to the calls.

Regarding the application, what we are looking for is the narrative form that we have seen just earlier and the budget form. All those documents are now integrated in the platform. So all application has to be done online. We have only provided you with the Word and Excel sheets in order for you to prepare your proposals, but you need to submit the proposals in the platform.

Now some tips. And as we have already received some questions, if it's better to be focused, we think really that it is better to be focused and respond specifically to the call objectives.

Read the call several times. Read our guide on the granting system. And of course, please use the Council of Europe Resources, not only for the preparation of your project, but also if funded in the implementation phase of your project.

What is important, as all those projects are about youth participating in democratic life, is really that you prepare your proposal with young people.

Regarding the budget, we all know that this is an estimated budget at the beginning. Of course, estimate to the best of your capacities. If the grant is awarded, there may be budget changes during implementation.

As said, please really try to be focused on some specific objectives of the call and really try to identify the challenges and the needs carefully.

If you have further questions, each Wednesday we also have digital open desk online from 2 to 4 P.m. Central European Time.