



12 August 2020

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH

English only

International Youth Day

On the occasion of International Youth Day, the Advisory Council on Youth celebrates all young people who are not only the future but also the present of Europe, who represent and claim the values of the Council of Europe and who strive to create more opportunities for everyone to grow, change, participate, and make decisions.

Young people have always been at the centre of society in the role of changemakers, striving to better their lives and pass on a better society to future generations. In recent years, in some member states, we have witnessed positive changes following protests that have been made possible thanks to the enthusiasm and dedication of youth who, despite challenges, chose to stay in their countries and fight for democracy and human rights.

Across Europe, **young people have a crucial role in revitalising democracies across our continent.** We are the ones who are ambitious and courageous in spreading democratic values, fighting for human rights and the rule of law at local, national and international levels. Yet, **for the democratic vigour to develop, young people must learn the language and tools of democracy**, which is why the Advisory Council on Youth will continue advocating for the implementation of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in formal and non-formal education.

On this day, we draw your attention to the youth and other organisations providing youth services around Europe to help educate young people and give opportunities for personal and professional development. In this sense, youth organisations are playing a vital role in encouraging their peers to proactively act as citizens, claim their rights, address injustices and advance our societies in innovative ways, even in the middle of an extraordinary crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic. In light of this, the Advisory Council on Youth acknowledges the Council of Europe Youth for Democracy programme which offers education and training for youth workers, providing them with the knowledge, skills, networks and resources they need to support young people in different stages of life to reach their full potential.

Furthermore, the Advisory Council on Youth highly appreciates the work done by the Youth Department in the field of education and training of young people directly; offering safe spaces for young people to reflect their values, empowering youth to access their rights and to demand more meaningful youth participation at all levels. In addition, not least through the system of co-management, the Council of Europe has been a pioneer in **mainstreaming youth issues, an endeavour that is still in its beginnings in most member states.**

The Advisory Council on Youth is proud to represent young people in the Council of Europe, and strives to advocate for the rights of all young people, youth groups and youth organisations to make sure that all vulnerable youth groups (*young people with disabilities, young refugees/migrants, young LGBTQI people, young women, young people from rural communities, Roma youth*) are protected and have the necessary means to participate meaningfully in local, regional and national arenas that concern issues related to their life.

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.