



DFD-YD/ETD (2026) 112

Strasbourg, 27 July 2026

Youth advocacy for democracy and human rights

Training course

28 September – 3 October 2026
European Youth Centre, Strasbourg

Call for participants
Deadline: 14 August 2026, 14:00 Strasbourg time

About the training course

The Council of Europe Youth Department organises the third edition of the training course Youth Advocacy for Democracy and Human Rights between 27 September and 4 October 2026 in the European Youth Centre Strasbourg. The training course takes place in parallel with the plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Organised in the framework of the Youth Revitalising Democracy project, the course responds to the needs of youth civil society to make full use of their capacity and impact policy and politics at local, national and international level.

Aim and objectives

The training course aims to develop the competences of youth civil society and young activists to advocate for human rights, democracy, ensuring a youth perspective in all the Council of Europe work, as well as advocating for the implementation and expansion of Council of Europe standards at national and local level.

Objectives of the course:

- To familiarise participants with the Council of Europe, its institutions and standards for democracy, human rights and youth participation
- To develop participants' competences in human rights-based advocacy and strengthen their capacity to develop and implement advocacy strategies and practices
- To create a space for sharing and learning from each other, as well as from examples of good practice in human rights and democracy advocacy, structures for youth participation in decision making, working with decision makers, etc.
- To associate participants with the Youth Department's work, notably the project Youth revitalising democracy
- To develop common advocacy initiatives/actions, also supporting the advocacy objectives of the project Youth revitalising democracy: enhancing youth participation in the elections and removing barriers to youth standing in elections, as well as securing structures for youth participation in decision-making.

Methodology and programme of the course

The training course will be based on the approaches on democratic citizenship and human rights education, being designed to be an experience of mutual learning and sharing among participants. The participants will have the chance to have hands on experiences, as well as engage with experts from the Council of Europe institutions and sectors, in order to learn how to advocate on youth issues within the institution, as well as advocate for the implementation of Council of Europe standards at national and local level. The training course is taking place in parallel with the plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and it will provide for ways to engage with members of PACE and attend sessions of the PACE.

Profile of participants

The training course is designed for participants who are:

- aged between 18 and 30 years, exceptions can be made if justified;
- representatives of national youth councils, international youth organisations/networks, and other youth civil society, including local and regional youth councils and youth

branches of political parties, motivated to further advocate towards and cooperate with the Council of Europe;

- holding a leadership position in their organisations to follow-up on the training course with advocacy campaigns/initiatives;
- committed to the values of the Council of Europe, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and to youth participation and are interested in taking further action;
- motivated and able to take in the entire training course and be involved in the project follow-up;
- able to work autonomously in English;
- resident in one of the state parties to the European Cultural Convention; exceptions can be made if justified.

The Council of Europe welcomes applications from all candidates who fulfil the specific profile of the activities, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

Application, procedure and selection of participants

All candidates must duly complete this online form [HERE](#).

In addition to completing their application form online, they should send **a support letter from their sending organisation** via email with the title TC ADVOCACY “YOUR NAME” SUPPORT LETTER at youthdemocracy@coe.int.

The Council of Europe will select up to 30 participants on the basis of the profile outlined above. It will try as far as possible to respect the organisations’ priorities, but also to ensure a balance between genders, geographical regions, different types of experiences, cultural backgrounds and organisations, institutions and projects. A waiting list may be established. Candidates will be informed whether their application has been accepted or rejected, and if they have been put on the waiting list, by 1 September 2026.

The full application form including the support letter from sending organisation must be submitted on-line **before 14:00 Strasbourg time, 14 August 2026**.

Financial and practical conditions of participation

Travel expenses

Travel expenses and visa fees for the training seminar in Strasbourg will be reimbursed according to the rules of the Council of Europe. Only the participants who attend the entire training seminar can be reimbursed.

Participants are expected to arrive to the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg on Sunday, 27 September and depart on Sunday, 4 October 2026.

Accommodation

Board and lodging for the residential training seminar will be provided and paid for by the Council of Europe at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg. Participants will be accommodated in twin rooms. The European Youth Centres are accessible to people with disabilities and can take measures to accommodate for any access needs of participants in this respect. Please provide the necessary information in your application form.

Working languages

English will be the working language of the training course. Participants are required to be able to express themselves autonomously in English.

Further information

For any questions, please contact us at youthdemocracy@coe.int.

Background information

The Council of Europe Summit in Reykjavik held in May 2023, the Heads of State and Government of the organisation's 46 member states decided to strengthen the Council of Europe and its work in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law by adopting a declaration on democracy principles ¹which emphasizes the importance of investing in a democratic future for all:

“Priority will be given to supporting the participation of young persons in democratic life and decision-making processes, including through education about human rights and core democratic values, such as pluralism, inclusion, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability.”

The Reykjavik Declaration, entitled United around our values, also sets a high standard, rooted in the values of human rights and democracy, for the Council of Europe work:

“... a youth perspective in the Organisation's intergovernmental and other deliberations as youth participation in decision-making processes improves the effectiveness of public policies and strengthens democratic institutions through open dialogue.”

At the initiative of the Joint Council on Youth, the [Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective](#) has been adopted by the 10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth (Malta, 8-9 October 2025). The Reference Framework provides guidance to the Council of Europe on how to integrate and operationalise the youth perspective, as well as to the member states on how to follow up at national level.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has adopted Resolution 2553 [“Strengthening the youth perspective in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly”](#) in June 2024, introducing measures such as the Youth Participation Mechanism and the function of youth rapporteurs in the work of all its Committees (except the Committee for the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights).

On 12 March 2026, the Committee of Ministers joined the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in adopting the [European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#) as a recommendation to member States of the Council of Europe. The Charter is the key European standard in respect to youth participation.

These developments, together with other efforts undertaken by the Council of Europe to make institutions youth friendly and support the involvement of civil society open possibilities for advocacy for youth organisations and young people.

¹ The Reykjavik Declaration – United around our values, Appendix 3 Reykjavik Principles for Democracy is available [here](#).

To translate into reality the promise of the Reykjavik, young people and youth civil society need both the political will and effort into the creation of relevant structures for participation in decision making, as well as the capacity and competences to meaningfully take part in these structures and processes. For young people to be successfully and meaningfully participating in the Council of Europe work, their capacity needs to be developed starting with knowledge about the work done by the institution beyond its youth sector, and competences to engage with decision makers in various fields.