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DFD-YD/ETD (2024) 55

Strasbourg, 27 February 2024

Training course **Young activists for democracy**

European Youth Centre Budapest

Residential seminar 15-20 April 2024

Online learning and mentoring: 21 April – 30 June 2024

Call for participants

Deadline: **15 March 2024, 14:00 CET**

Youth revitalising democracy – the project

[Youth revitalising democracy](#) is a project led by the Council of Europe [Youth Department](#). It aims to restore mutual trust between young people and democratic institutions and processes. The project builds on the results of the youth campaign Democracy Here | Democracy Now that raised awareness among young people, youth civil society and as well as decision makers on the dangers posed by continued backsliding of democracy in Europe and an increasing mistrust between young people and democratic institutions. The key event of the campaign and of the 50th anniversary of the youth sector of the Council of Europe, the Youth Action Week (June 2022, Strasbourg) brought together 450 young activists and decision makers from Europe and beyond. The [Call for Action](#) resulted from the activity was endorsed by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and informs the objectives and the activities in the project for the period 2023-2027. The participants recalled that:

“... all processes to revitalize democracy must start with the respect and thorough implementation and monitoring of existing Council of Europe standards, and lead to their further development.”

The Reykjavik summit of Heads of State and Governments of the member states of the Council of Europe, held in May 2023 re-affirmed the commitment of the member states to the mission and the standards of the institution. The important role played by young people and civil society is recognised in the [Reykjavik Declaration – United around our values](#):

“... youth participation in decision-making processes improves the effectiveness of public policies and strengthens democratic institutions through open dialogue.”

The Joint Council on Youth has decided in October 2023 the continuation of the project for the period 2024-2027 with two key areas of action:

1. Enhancing democratic youth participation through standards and support measures to create, update and strengthen of youth participation in decision-making processes at local or national level, and the creation/maintenance of an enabling environment for youth civil society;
2. Education about human rights and core democratic values.

Key activities foreseen for the next four years include:

- capacity building and resources development on advocacy by youth civil society activists regarding access to rights and democratic development;
- elaborating and promoting Council of Europe standards on setting up and developing local youth councils, as well as on enhancing participation of young people in core democratic processes (e.g., elections);
- enhancing dialogue between politicians, decision makers and young people and their civil society; research on barriers to youth participation especially their economic and digital dimensions;
- capacity-building and educational resources development for youth multipliers on democratic citizenship and human rights education in member states, including the issues of digital citizenship and the impact of AI;
- awareness raising, community and partnership development – building on an existent network of youth civil society, young activists, but as well national and local authorities, and international organisations, and supporting the community to advocate for common goals.

In this framework, the Youth Department organises the second edition of the training course Young activists for democracy to take place in the European Youth Centre Budapest between 15-20 April 2024. The course builds on the achievements of the training course held in 2023 and aims to further strengthen the capacity of youth civil society to advocate, mobilise and engage in processes that aim at revitalising democracy in Europe, particularly focused on youth participation.

The training course

The training course aims to develop the capacity of young activists and youth civil society to advocate, mobilise and engage in processes in revitalising democracy in Europe, contributing to the full realisation of the Reykjavik Principles for democracy.

Objectives of the course:

- to learn about democracy and human rights and the Council of Europe standards and relevant work, notably the Reykjavik Principles for democracy.
- to explore the causes and effects of democratic decline in Europe today and the role that young people can play in revitalising democracy.
- to develop participants' competences in activism and mobilisation of young people and youth civil society with a view to uphold democratic values, implement and expand the standards for youth participation.
- To familiarise and associate participants with the Call for Action and the project *Youth revitalising democracy*.
- To develop plans for the involvement of the activists in the project activities, notably in awareness-raising actions with the occasion of the International Day of Democracy in 2024.

Methodology and structure of the course

The training course is based on blended learning, combining a residential training seminar with distance online learning and mentoring features. The training seminar is based on principles of non-formal education, being learner-centred and highly participatory. The overall course will give participants the opportunity to experience, reflect and discuss issues related with democracy and human rights, particularly the role of young people and youth participation. The entire course is designed as a mutual learning situation in which, with use of diverse methods, participants can compare their approaches and ways of action.

To support participants in follow-up actions in 2024, the course will include mentoring features as well as tailor made e-learning modules that will support initiatives undertaken by the participants.

Profile of participants

The training course is designed for participants who are:

- aged between 18 and 30 years (exceptions can be made if justified)
- be a representative of/be supported by a youth organisation or movement, including international youth organisations/networks, political party youth organisations, national youth councils and local youth councils, minority youth organisation, and any other youth civil society motivated to advocate for youth participation, democracy and human rights
- in a position to engage in follow-up activities in 2024, particularly around the International Day for Democracy (15 September).

- committed to the values of the Council of Europe, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and to youth participation
- motivated and able to take active part in all phases of the project
- able to work autonomously in the English language
- are 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 apply on-line at <https://youthapplications.coe.int>.

The Council of Europe will select up to 35 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.

The full application form including the support letter from sending organisation must be submitted on-line **before 14:00 (CET), 15 March 2024**.

Financial and practical conditions of participation

Travel and visa

Travel expenses and visa fees for the training seminar in Budapest 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 should arrive to Budapest on 14 April and depart on 21 April 2024.

Board and lodging

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

Working language

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.