

World Forum for Democracy, Strasbourg, 6-8 November 2024

**Democracy and Diversity**

**Can we transcend the divides?**

# Call for initiatives

The World Forum for Democracy is a platform for global dialogue between policy-makers and civil society about contemporary democracy challenges and solutions. It highlights innovative ideas and initiatives and puts them through a thorough examination, to serve as inspiration for the Council of Europe and for states and no-state actors across the world. A unique event of its kind, the Forum contributes to the evolution of democracy towards more participatory and inclusive institutions and processes.

**WHY IS THE WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY SPECIAL?**

 The strength of democracy lies in its ability to embrace and balance differences to serve society as a whole. Diversity is, a source of resilience, adaptability and creativity. But it can also be exploited for political gain by polarising opinion and deepening divides. Socio-economic, gender, ethnic and other inequalities fuel divisive rhetoric and trigger electoral choices which make democracies increasingly fragile. In a year during which around one half of the world’s population has been called to the polls, the 2024 edition of the World Forum for Democracy will address the critical threats posed by disinformation and divisive political narratives around diversity, including in the context of election campaigns. The Forum will focus on how electoral processes inadvertently crystallise societal divides and provide fertile ground for populism to flourish. In light of the urgency of this challenge, the Forum will explore ways of raising understanding among citizens of the risks posed by populism for their fundamental rights and freedoms. To achieve this, the Forum will feature inspirational talks by thought leaders. Analytical labs will challenge proposed new solutions and identify ideas worth spreading. Moreover, the Forum will actively foster the creation of networks and communities of practice, serving as incubators for turning ideas into action.

**WHAT IS THE 12th WORLD FORUM FOR DEMOCRACY ABOUT?**

The 12th World Forum for Democracy will debate the issues and generate new ideas for tackling the challenges to living peacefully in complex societies, which we face today. **Plenary sessions** will be an opportunity to discuss with speakers from all continents, including politicians, public and private officials, international organisations and civil society. **Forum Talks** will bring together relevant experts and academics that will share their experience and discuss how to improve the current situation. **Forum Labs** will allow participants to learn about ground-breaking initiatives that offer responses to the key questions above based on an analysis of their real impact and replicability. The initiatives should help us understand how democracy and democratic institutions and practices can help us wage peace and counter causes of war in our societies.

**WHAT IS THE FORMAT OF
THE 12th WFD?**

The labs are the heart of the World Forum for Democracy. Their objective is to address specific issues through the critical analysis of innovative initiatives, thus identifying solutions and ideas worth spreading. The selected initiatives, submitted by any public or private organisations, will be briefly presented and critically assessed by multidisciplinary panels and participants in the labs. The key conclusions and lessons learnt from the labs will be discussed in a summing up session to prepare the overall conclusions of the Forum. The Forum participants will vote to choose the winner of the Democracy Innovation Award among the presented initiatives.

**THE LABS – WHO CAN PRESENT AN INITIATIVE AND HOW?**

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**The World Forum for Democracy calls for expressions of interest from innovative initiatives, from all over the world, aiming at enhancing democracy and contributing to sustainable peace.**

**These may be for example, but not limited to:**

* Initiatives working towards depolarising elections, promoting non-divisive campaigning and different forms of collaborative democracy;
* Actions promoting unifying leadership and reconciliation in polarised societies;
* Alternative methods of making policy decisions, including, but not limited to, sortition, deliberative democracy, citizen panels, etc.
* Organised efforts to effectively keep social media companies and online platforms accountable for the content or polarising impact of their algorithms;
* Mechanisms for improving resilience to disinformation campaigns and manipulation, including tools to remove fake accounts from online platforms;
* Initiatives fighting corruption and “revolving door” policy, limiting the number of terms in office, or advocating the deprofessionalisation of politics;
* Platforms for candidate vetting;
* Innovative methods for fostering and sustaining meaningful civic engagement in politics (including that of young people, women or minorities);
* New approaches to empowering the underprivileged or underrepresented groups and increase their political mobilisation;
* Innovative approaches to making the political parties and coalitions, especially those in opposition, more able to act as a critical, yet constructive counterpower;
* Initiatives to avoid concentration of media ownership and sustainable business models for media
* Solutions which aim at detecting and countering AI-generated fakes and for keeping the AI-tools in check;
* AI supported political decision-making and AI tools for deliberative democracy;
* New strategies to deconstruct the mechanics of disinformation campaigns and manipulations of public opinion, including citizen education for enhanced disinformation awareness;
* Innovative approaches to diversity management, social inclusion, and integration, including, but not limited to, reconciliation and trust-building processes, overcoming segregation, building social cohesion and intercultural exchange;
* Cross-border and international partnerships in achieving more inclusive societies.

Submissions from any public or private organisation should be made by answering the questionnaire in the appendix and sending it to **forum\_democracy@coe.int** by **17 May 2024.**

**HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION?**

One presenter for the selected initiatives will be invited to Strasbourg to take part in the World Forum. Travel and accommodation expenses may be covered by the Council of Europe if required.

For further information about the World Forum for Democracy 2024, please visit our [website.](https://www.coe.int/en/web/world-forum-democracy/home)



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**Democracy and Diversity**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**For the submission of an initiative**

**at the World Forum for Democracy**

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| --- |
| Country:  |
| Organisation/institution:  |
| Title of the initiative:  |
| Contact person  |
| Address:  |
| Telephone:  |
| Mobile phone:  |
| E-mail :  |
| Website:  |
| Brief presentation of the organisation (legal status, number of members/employees, field of operation, goals, other relevant information). |
| (max. 300 words) |
| Brief description of the initiative which will be presented during the World Forum for Democracy: goals, actions, scope, participants, partners.  |
| (max. 200 words) |
| What is the origin of the initiative (sources of inspiration, relevant academic debate etc.)?  |
| (max. 300 words) |
| How does this initiative contribute to social cohesion and promotion of diversity? |
| (max. 400 words) |
| How was the initiative implemented? |
|  |
| What have been the results so far?  |
|  |
| Which indicators did you use to assess the initiative’s results? |
|  |
| What challenges have been encountered in the implementation phase? |
|  |
| How does your initiative differ from other similar existing initiatives? What makes your initiative a democracy innovation? |
|  |
| To what extent is your initiative transferable to other organisations and countries? |
|  |
| Any additional relevant information/references. |
|  |
| **PRACTICAL INFORMATION****(Please note: the following information will not feed into the jury’s assessment of your initiative)** |
| Please indicate who will present the initiative, as well as a replacement in case of an emergency that prevents the first presenter from participating in the Forum (Mr/Ms, name, position, city, country, e-mail, telephone): |
|  |
| Language of presentation: |
| * English
* French
 |
| Will you need a Visa for entering France? |
| * Yes
* No
 |
| Are you in position to fund your participation in the World Forum? |
| * Yes
* No

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| Will you need assistance during the World Forum because of any kind of disability? |
| * Yes
* No

(Please note that the Palais building is accessible to people with mobility issues).  |
| Could you please list the social media accounts of your initiative? |
| * Facebook
* Instagram
* Twitter
* TikTok
* Other (please specify)
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