

This initiative is a contribution towards the

New Democratic Pact for Europe

Youth Innovating Democracy

24 – 26 June 2026

European Youth Centre
Strasbourg

Programme



Présidence de / Presidency of
MONACO
Conseil de l'Europe / Council of Europe
05/2026 - 11/2026



Programme

Tuesday 23 June 2026

Arrivals

- 17:00** Registration of participants at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg
Activities and debates corners
- 18:30** 😊 Dinner
- 20:30** Welcome evening

Wednesday 24 June 2026 ▶ ROOM 0.1

- 08:30** Getting to know each other activities
- 08:45** Welcome by **Liliya ELENKOVA**, *Chair of the Joint Council on Youth* and **Rareş VOICU**, *President of the European Youth Forum*
- 09:00** The New Democratic Pact for Europe: responding to today's challenges
Keynote and exchange with **Alain BERSET**, *Secretary General of the Council of Europe*
- 10:00** Youth innovating democracy - exchange with **Gabriel REVEL**,
Permanent Representative of Monaco to the Council of Europe and President of the Ministers' Deputies
- 10:20** Introduction to the objectives, programme and methodology of the event
Getting to know each other
- 11:00** ☕ Break
- 11:30** Histories and futures of European democracy
- 13:00** 😊 Lunch
- 14:30** Exchange with **Yevheniia KRAVCHUK**, *Youth Rapporteur, Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*
- 15:00** Youth visions: a manifesto for a European democracy
- 16:00** ☕ Break
- 16:30** Youth visions: a manifesto for a European democracy
- 18:15** Innovating democracy - address by **Béatrice FRESKO-ROLFO**,
Chairperson of the delegation of Monaco to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- 18:30** Reception hosted by **Lilya ELENKOVA**, *Chair of the Joint Council on Youth* and **Emma WEDNER**, *Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth*
- 19:30** 😊 Dinner

Thursday 25 June 2026

09:30 Thematic parallel working groups

Juvenating politics: innovating the system, with: Andreea SCRIOŞTEANU, Vice-President, European Youth Forum, Nina GRMUŠA, Advisor on Youth Perspective, Council of Europe, Alessandro PADOVAN, Advisory Council on Youth

▶ ROOM 0.1 EN-FR

Equality alive: the promise of democracy, with: Aoife NOLAN, President, European Committee of Social Rights (online), Dragoş TARȚA, Advisory Council on Youth, and Nina PORTOLAN, Advisory Council on Youth

▶ ROOM 3.1 EN

Empower communities: an eco-system for youth democratic participation, with: Claudia LUCIANI, Director, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Marcus MELAU, Advisory Council on Youth, Nadia TISMĂNARU, Advisory Council on Youth

▶ ROOM 3.2 EN

- 11:00** ☕ Coffee break
- 11:30** Parallel Thematic working groups continued
- 13:00** 😊 Lunch
- 14:30** Parallel Thematic working groups continued
- 15:30** ▶ ROOM 0.1 Plenary session
- 18:00** Free evening and self-organised dinner

Friday 26 June 2026

09:30 Thematic parallel working groups continued with coffee break included

**Juvenating politics:
innovating the system**

🚩 **ROOM 0.1** EN-FR

**Equality alive:
the promise of democracy**

🚩 **ROOM 3.1** EN

**Empower communities: an eco-system
for youth democratic participation**

🚩 **ROOM 3.2** EN

13:00 😊 Lunch

14:30 Youth perspectives for a New Democratic Pact for Europe (Presentations of the final proposals).
Youth political engagement – exchange with **Petra BAYR**,
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

16:00 🕒 Break

16:30 Innovating democracy: closing session of the youth event with:
Emma WEDNER, *Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth*,
Marja RUOTANEN, *Director General, Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity*

19:30 😊🍷 Dinner and festive evening!

Why a New Democratic Pact for Europe?

Democratic backsliding, disinformation, impunity, and authoritarianism are undermining democracy in Europe. People are increasingly afraid and frustrated. It comes at a time when democratic security – the resilience of our democratic institutions, freedoms, and values – is our first line of defence against the threats we face. A collective response is needed. There is no quick fix and no single solution. With the New Democratic Pact, the Council of Europe unites with its partners to boost solutions that work and create new responses. To identify them, consultations are needed. The Pact will serve as a collective and inclusive process – not to reinvent democracy, but to reinforce its foundations, amplify its benefits, and innovate its form to make it tangible for everyone, especially younger generations. The directions set during the consultation phase running through 2026 will shape the work that follows.

About the Youth Event

The youth event is the key youth event of the consultation phase leading towards the New Democratic Pact for Europe, being organised in the framework of the Presidency of Monaco of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The youth event will further strengthen the ties between the Council of Europe, its mission, and young people. The event is designed to discuss the aspirations, challenges and proposals of young people to innovate and renew democracy, building on the commitment and experience of a long-standing partnership in the field of youth.

The Council of Europe has been leading the way in youth participation and engagement in democratic decision-making, starting with its co-management

system. More recently, the 10th Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, held in Malta in 8-9 October 2025, recognised the important role of youth participation. The national delegations included in their composition representatives of youth civil society, in their vast majority national youth councils or similar platforms, where national youth councils do not exist. The Council of Europe [Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective](#) sets an innovative and high standard for the integration of young people's views in decision-making in all policy areas, not only in the youth sector. This offers the possibility of a strengthened role for national youth councils to play an important role in organising youth participation and consultation in member States across policy areas beyond the youth sector. In 2026, the Committee of Ministers joined the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in responding to the needs and aspirations of young people through the adoption of the [Recommendation CM/Rec \(2026\)3 on the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#), an innovative standard that completes a multilevel framework of governance.

The event also builds on the experience and models tested by youth organisations, laboratories for democratic participation and innovation addressing the full spectrum of youth engagement.

The youth event will develop proposals, as well as creative outputs to be included in the New Democratic Pact, notably in respect of its pillar on Innovating democracy.

The youth event builds on the key proposals and achievements made by young people and youth civil society in the last four years in respect to revitalising democracy. Starting



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with the Youth Action Week: Democracy Now! (2022, Strasbourg) within the campaign Democracy Here | Democracy Now, young people have raised public attention to the need for urgent action to recommit to democracy. They have made concrete proposals as showcased by the Call for Action (2022), the Message of the youth event, Confidence in tomorrow (2024) and the conclusions of the youth event of the 10th Conference of Ministers responsible for.

Building on these achievements, but also on the challenges faced by young people today, the youth event will be shaped around three key themes that emerged as areas where innovation is needed.

1. Juvenate politics: innovating the system

Only 2.8% of the world's parliamentarians are aged 30 and under.¹ This amplifies the perception that young people are often absent from the chambers of power where decisions are made. On the other hand, young people are politically interested, they are the driving force of movements against climate change, corruption, and for human rights and democracy. Youth organisations are often targeted in anti-democratic crackdowns, further aggravating their particular vulnerability. The European Youth Forum and young people have long campaigned for a reform of the core element of political systems – elections – advocating for lowering the voting age, as well as for the inclusion of youth quotas on the electoral lists, and for education for democratic citizenship and human rights. This thematic strand will develop through plenary sessions and workshops proposals on how to bring young people into the centre of politics, looking at examples already tested and innovative proposals and practices that could be upscaled.

2. Equality alive: the promise of democracy

The promise of equal treatment and chances is core to the democratic objective. Much of the disenchantment with democracy of young people is also connected with their perspectives for an independent and decent life. Recent studies reveal a strong connection between distance and distrust in representative democracy and the experience of exclusion and marginalisation by young Europeans. The life prospects of younger generations, the shocking increase in cost of living have been severely impacted by the accumulated impact of a series of economic, sanitary, political crises and wars. Young people, especially those with a minority background, or coming from low-income households, are most severely, also increasing potential mental health distress. The Council of Europe attaches the utmost importance to access to social rights, as again demonstrated in 2026 through the High Level Conference on the European Social Charter (Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, 18-19 March 2026) or the work done in the youth field on the implementation of the Enter! Recommendation CM/rec (2015)3 on access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights. Discussions on economic policies and public

investment are heavily impacting young people, however, they rarely consider their input, aspirations and concerns. This thematic strand will address concerns of young people in respect of equality and economic justice and make proposals on how the Council of Europe, member States and youth civil society can act in the upcoming years.

3. Empower communities: an eco-system for youth democratic participation

Youth democratic participation requires an eco-system in place to thrive. The recently adopted CM/Rec(2026)3 Recommendation on the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life stresses the importance of youth civil society and their roles as laboratories of democratic learning and practice, youth centres and spaces, and opportunities for learning and engagement offered through youth work and democracy and human rights education. Reports on the state of democracy show that in the process of autocratisation and democratic backsliding, the first rights to be attacked are the freedom of association and assembly. This strand can also provide for more practical outputs, such as artistic expression, workshops on participatory arts, etc. and also support engagement with local and regional authorities.

Objectives

- To engage young people and youth organisation in shaping the New Democratic Pact for Europe with critical discussions and proposals on how to innovate and rejuvenate democracy, ensuring inclusive youth participation.
- To highlight practices and initiatives of young people and youth civil society on the relevant content strands of the event
- To provide a space for advocacy, networking and dialogue between young people and political representatives at Council of Europe and member States level.
- To associate young people and youth civil society, as key partners, with the Council of Europe values and work, notably the New Democratic Pact for Europe.

Manifesto for a European Democracy in 2049

The youth event will lead to the creation of a youth manifesto proposing youth visions for European democracy in 2049, the year in which the Council of Europe will turn 100. The manifesto will encompass the proposals made by the participants in the activity through a collaborative and interactive process for how they envision democracy to look, feel and be like in 2049, as well as concrete measures to be implemented by the Council of Europe, member States and civil society actors to support reaching that vision by 2049.

1 Inter-Parliamentary Union, Youth participation in national parliaments 2025, available [here](#).