

Youth Space conference
Reception and dinner with the participation of
Ms Bärbel Bas, President of the German Bundestag
Berlin – 14 November 2024, 18h30
Speech by Ms Despina Chatzivassiliou-Tsovilis, Secretary General of the
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Venue:
(Foyer of the Marie-Elisabeth-Lüders building)

Liebe Frau Präsidentin,
Lieber Herr Schwabe,
Liebe Jugendteilnehmer und -teilnehmerinnen “dear Youth participants”,
Meine Damen und Herren,

Ich möchte mich bei Frau Präsidentin Bas für diesen wunderschönen Empfang herzlich bedanken.

Wie schon letztes Jahr, es ist mir eine große Ehre heute hier zu sein.
Das Thema Jugendpartizipation liegt mir sehr am Herzen und ich habe die heutigen Diskussionen mit großem Interesse verfolgt.

I am particularly happy to be here with you on the occasion of the milestone celebrating the 75 year of the Council of Europe with the young voices who will shape the next 75.

Promoting intergenerational dialogue and solidarity and securing intergenerational justice will be a key factor for success for now and the next 75 years.

The multidimensional and interrelated challenges that we are currently facing – from conflict, geopolitical and financial crises, to global health and climate change –all demand solutions that draw from diverse perspectives. And central to this diversity is the voice of youth.

Your role is crucial in countering the democratic backsliding that we see taking place across Europe. When young people are involved in decision making processes and in policy implementation, it doesn't just make our institutions more representative; it enriches their work, fosters trust, and helps break a cycle of growing disenchantment and disengagement.

The Council of Europe is playing its part, with the co-management mechanism of the Joint Council on Youth, and now also with the Youth Participation Mechanism of the Parliamentary Assembly.

I am confident that this new mechanism will allow the Assembly to integrate fresh energies and inspiration in its future work: while it will require additional efforts to function, it will also repay these efforts with new ideas, new perspectives, and new solutions.

I encourage you all to closely follow the work of the Assembly, and actively engage with the MPs from your countries, proposing potential discussion topics for the Assembly. Your contributions will be essential in making this mechanism effective.

To conclude, I believe that engaging and incorporating youth perspectives has a much deeper effect: it nurtures the next generation of political leaders – those who will uphold and advance our democracies in the years to come.

And I am sure this evening we have around us many future political leaders. Thank you!