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Strasbourg, 31 January 2024

CONFIDENCE IN TOMORROW

*Sharing and shaping democracy and human
rights together with young people*

Youth event on the occasion of the
75th anniversary of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre, Strasbourg
14-16 May 2024

Call for participants

Deadline: 28 February 2024

Background

The founding of the Council of Europe on 5 May 1949 in London was seen as “something new and hopeful in European life [...] the establishment of a common democratic institution” at a time of great uncertainty for Europe and in the aftermath of Second World War. The Statute of the organisation proclaims that “the pursuit of peace based upon justice and international co-operation is vital for the preservation of human society and civilisation” – words which have not lost any relevance 75 years on.

The challenges that the world faced in 1949 are far away echoes of the challenges of the present: the spectrum of war (past or present) and violence in society, the uncertainty of the future posed by economic deprivation, social challenges, refugees’ crisis and the attacks on a united Europe. While only 10 European states founded the Council of Europe in 1949, the institution was a vision to hope for and build towards.

Today, 46 member states are uniting around the values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law as they share, develop and uphold them as Council of Europe. In the [Reykjavik Declaration United Around our Values](#), which resulted from their 4th Summit held in May 2023, the Heads of State and Government declared to invest in the democratic future by ensuring that everyone is able to play their role in democratic processes. They also called for priority to be given to supporting the participation of young persons in democratic life and decision-making processes.

From the Congress of The Hague in 1948 throughout the life of the Council of Europe, youth organisations and young people have been playing a crucial role in safeguarding the values of this organisation. To have confidence in tomorrow, therefore in the future of democracy and human rights in Europe, one must support a confident, hopeful and committed youth, able to participate in all democratic life and in decision-making processes. This requires addressing the challenges and issues that concern young people today, such as climate crisis, intergenerational injustices and grim economic perspective, lack of trust in democracy and democratic processes, and they need to be addressed together with young people.

Young people revitalising democracy is a priority of the Council of Europe, as also laid out in the Youth Sector Strategy 2030 adopted by the Committee of Ministers [[CM/Res\(2020\)2](#)]. The [Call for Action](#) by participants of the 2022 Youth Action Week gives testimony to the young people’s creativity, energy and resolve to revitalise democracy based on individual freedom, political liberty, human rights and the rule of law.

The Reykjavik Declaration and Principles for Democracy identify the importance of young people and of youth policy, expressed in the commitment to include a youth perspective in the intergovernmental and other deliberations of the Organisations and calls

(...) to support 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 75th anniversary in 2024 represents an important opportunity to strengthen the mutual commitments between the Council of Europe and young people, whereby the Council of Europe enables young people across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe’s core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Confidence in Tomorrow

The youth event *Confidence in tomorrow* is organised in the framework of the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Council of Europe under the Presidency of Liechtenstein.

The event seeks to further renew and strengthen the close relationship between the mission of the Council of Europe and the current and future generations of young people. It is organised for young people to share their aspirations and commitment to a democratic Europe and to contribute, as irreplaceable partners for the present and the future of Council of Europe to shaping the future of democracy and human rights on the European continent.

The youth event will develop ideas and proposals for strengthening democracy based on the values and principles of the Council of Europe, part of the common heritage of all people in Europe.

The participants will also have the opportunity to share their aspiration and proposals in the official celebration of the 75th anniversary, which will be held in the Strasbourg Opera House on 16 May, in the presence of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member states.

Objectives of the event

1. To associate young people and youth civil society to the 75th anniversary of the Council of Europe and its relevance for young people today
2. To engage youth organisations, notably national youth councils, as partners in the follow-up to the conclusions of the Reykjavik Summit, in particular the implementation of the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy
3. To identify emerging (youth) issues and explore the approaches for integrating a youth perspective across the work of the Council of Europe and its member states
4. To strengthen youth participation, by pursuing dialogue between young people, youth civil society and political decision-makers.

Programme and outcomes

The youth event will bring together some 100 representatives of national youth councils, international youth organisations, as well as representatives of the national authorities in charge of youth, for a three-day programme that will be a strong experience of the participatory approaches characteristic to non-formal education and youth work.

The programme will feature plenary sessions, working groups organised according to the key themes of the event, integrating also themes brought up by the participants; a specific attention will be placed on the application of the Reykjavik Principles of Democracy in the shaping of the mutual roles of the participants and the Council of Europe.

The programme will feature also a dialogue session on 16 May with ministers of foreign affairs attending the solemn Committee of Ministers meeting. Key messages of the youth event will be conveyed by the young participants as part of the official programme of the celebrations in the Strasbourg Opera House on 16 May.

The appended programme outline provides a sketch of the main programme flow and contents, subject to adjustments.

Profile of participants

The youth event is primarily designed to bring together participants who are either:

- a) representatives of a national youth council, or national organisations of a similar scope
- b) members of the Advisory Council on Youth and of the European Steering Committee for Youth
- c) representatives of an international youth organisations, including organisations with an observer role to the Joint Council (e.g., EYCA and ERYICA)
- d) young activists for human rights and democracy involved in specific projects of the European Youth Foundation or in the youth campaign for revitalising democracy
- e) youth delegates to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

And in addition, fulfil the following criteria:

- be in a position to multiply and follow-up on the conclusions of the youth event
- be resident in a state party to the European Cultural Convention (exceptions are possible if duly justified)
- be aged between 18-30 years (except members of the European Steering Committee for Youth)
- be able to work autonomously in English or in French
- be available for the entire duration of the youth event.

Application procedure and selection of participants

All candidates must duly complete the online application form. The deadline for submitting applications is **28 February 2024**, before 14:00 CET at <https://youthapplications.coe.int>.

The Council of Europe will select up to 100 participants based on the profile outlined above, ensuring 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 22 March 2024.

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.

Practical and financial conditions

Board and lodging

Accommodation will be provided in the European Youth Centre Strasbourg or in a hotel nearby. Meals will be provided in the European Youth Centre Strasbourg. The costs of accommodation and meals are covered by the Council of Europe.

Travel

Travel expenses will be reimbursed by bank transfer after the activity according to the rules of the Council of Europe. Only the participants who attend the entire event can be reimbursed. Participants are expected to arrive to the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg on 13 May and depart on 17 May 2024.

Working languages

The youth event will be held in English and French with simultaneous interpretation.

Questions

If you have any questions about this activity, please contact us at eyc.programme@coe.int .

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Monday, 13 May 2024

- Arrivals
- Registration at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg
- 19:00 Dinner
- 20:00 Welcome evening

Tuesday, 14 May

- 09:30 Opening session with:
 - Marija PEJČINOVIĆ BURIC, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
 - Domenik WANGER, Ambassador, Permanent representative of Liechtenstein
- 10:00 Getting to know each other
- 10:40 Introduction to the aim, objectives, programme, methodology of the youth event
- 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:30 Sharing experiences between the participants and the Council of Europe
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:30 Exploring the Reykjavik Principles for Democracy, their relevance for young people, challenges in their respect or implementation (working groups)
- 16:00 Break
- 16:30 Working group continued
- 17:30 Plenary presentations
- 19:00 Dinner at the headquarters of the Council of Europe
- 21:00 Informal evening in the European Youth Centre

Wednesday, 15 May

- 9:30 Looking ahead – Human rights and democracy in Europe – the role of Council of Europe, with:
 - Michael O'FLAHERTY, Commissioner for Human Rights (tbc)
 - NN, Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth
 - María RODRÍGUEZ ALCÁZAR, President of the European Youth Forum (tbc)
- 11:00 Creating visions for the future (working groups) – addressing key issues:
 - War and peace
 - Climate change
 - Social and economic/ intergenerational injustice
 - Democratic participation
 - ...
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:30 Checkpoint for the groups/ feedback
- 15:30 Working groups continued (with break included)
- 18:00 Closure of the day
- 19:00 Dinner

Thursday, 16 May

09:30 Working groups presentations and consolidation of the conclusions of the youth event

11:00 Break

11:30 Preparations for the anniversary event

Evaluation of the youth event

12:00 Lunch

13:30 Dialogue with Ministers of Foreign Affairs

15:30 Closure of the youth event

17:00 Event 75th anniversary of the Council of Europe - at Opéra national du Rhin
Reception

20:30 Dinner and party at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg (with live music)

Friday, 17 May 2024

Departures of participants