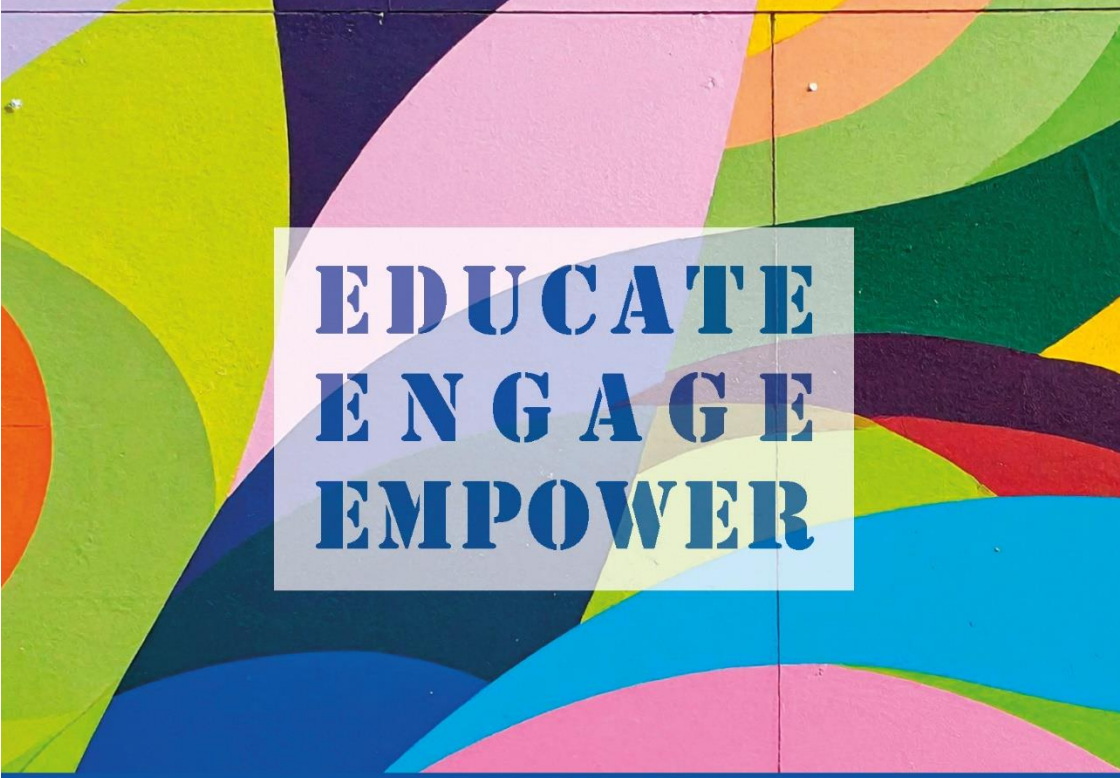


# YOUTH SHAPING DEMOCRACY PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Organised by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Parliament of Hungary

**Budapest, Hungary, 27 October 2026**
Hungarian National Assembly

HUNGARIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## CONTEXT

Across Europe, disinformation, political polarisation and concerns about the rule of law are weakening confidence in democratic institutions. Many citizens feel that formal political processes do not adequately reflect their concerns, contributing to a growing distance between the public and political institutions

This gap is particularly evident among young people, who are active in public debate but remain underrepresented in formal decision-making. Their connection to democracy depends not only on citizenship education, but also on opportunities to participate and to influence decisions that affect them.

Within this context, the Council of Europe's New Democratic Pact for Europe places participation and education at the centre of efforts to strengthen democratic institutions. Organised in cooperation with the host parliament and building on the work of the Parliamentary Assembly's Special Committee on the New Democratic Pact, this parliamentary conference will consider how parliaments, education systems and young people can work together to strengthen democratic participation.

## OBJECTIVES

The Conference aims to:

share parliamentary approaches to strengthening democratic participation, including in the context of the New Democratic Pact;

examine the links between democratic participation and education, with a particular focus on young people;

identify a limited number of realistic follow-up actions at national level, while reinforcing cooperation between PACE and national parliaments.

## FORMAT

The conference format will prioritise interaction and exchange, with moderated discussions in each session.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

- Members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (the Special Committee on the New Democratic Pact) and members of the host parliament;
- Representatives of the Council of Europe;
- Youth representatives and organisations active in democratic participation;
- Ministers of Education or high-level education officials;
- Representatives of relevant international and regional organisations;
- Selected civil society and academic experts with direct relevance to parliamentary or education-related work.

# DRAFT PROGRAMME

**09.00 – 09.30** **Opening session**

- **Forsthoffer Ágnes,** Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly
- **Petra Bayr,** President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- **Tanja Gonggrijp,** Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- **Judit Lannert,** Hungarian Minister of Education and Children's Affairs

**09.30 – 10.00** **Democracy Across Generations: Rebuilding Trust Through Participation and Education**

**Moderator**: **Péter Magyari,** an award-winning political journalist, Hungary

- **George Papandreou,** Second Vice-Chairperson of the Special Committee on the New Democratic Pact and General rapporteur on democracy of the Parliamentary Assembly
- **István Gyöngyösi,** Member of the National Assembly, Hungary

**10.00 – 11.15** **SESSION I**
**Understanding the Participation Gap: Youth, Trust and Democratic Legitimacy**

**Moderator**: **Paul Galles,** PACE Member, Luxembourg

- **Sir Christopher Chope,** Chair of the PACE Special Committee on the New Democratic Pact, United Kingdom
- **Dr. Petra Guasti, PhD**, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Institute of Political Studies, Charles University, Czech Republic
- **Xesc Mainzer**, Vice-Chair of the Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth, Spain
- **Eeva Luhtakallio,** Professor, Sociology, Docent, Faculty of Social Sciences, Finland

**10:30 – 11:15** **Moderated discussion with participants**

**11.15 – 11.30** ***Coffee break***

**11.30 – 12.45** **SESSION II**

**Citizens and Youth: How Parliaments Can Foster Participation and Trust**

**Moderator**: **Luz Martinez Seijo,** PACE Member, Spain

- **Damien Cottier,** Vice-Chair of the PACE Special Committee on the New Democratic Pact, Switzerland
- **Cristina Leston-Bandeira,** Chair of the International Parliament Engagement Network (IPEN), United Kingdom
- **Martin Karlsson,** Senior Lecturer, School of Social Sciences and Media Studies, Örebro University, Sweden
- **Maurizio Cuttin,** Member, Advisory Council on Youth, representative of the British Youth Council, United Kingdom

**12.00 – 12.45** **Moderated discussion with participants**

**12.45 – 14.00** ***Lunch***

**14.15 – 15.30** **SESSION III**

**Learning and Practicing Democracy: Towards the European Space for Citizenship Education**

- **Benjamin Dalle,** PACE member, Vice-Chairperson: Sub-Committee on Youth and the Society of the Future, Belgium
- **Lauren Bond,** Board Member of the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU), Ireland
- **Dóra Szűcs,** Chairperson of the Education Committee, Hungary
- **Kalypso Nicolaidis,** Chairperson in Global Affairs, European University Institute

**14.45 – 15.30** **Moderated discussion with parliamentarians, education authorities and youth representatives**

**15.30 – 15.45** ***Coffee break***

**15.45 – 17.00** **SESSION IV**

**Empowering Youth and Strengthening Democracy: The Way Forward**

**Moderator**: **Sevilay Çelenk,** PACE Member, Türkiye

- **Kalniņa-Lukaševica,** Chairperson of the Latvian National Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- **Wojciech Przybylski,** President of the Res Publica Foundation and Editor/CEO of Visegrad, Poland
- **Iida Karjalainen,** Representative, Finnish Youth Parliament, Finland
- **Santiago Barrail,** Policy Officer, Responsible for the overall coordination of the Youth Democracy Cohort, European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), France

**16.15 – 17.00** **Interactive discussion and agreement on follow-up priorities**

**17.00 – 17.15** **Closing session**

- **Márton Hajdu,** Chairperson of the Hungarian National Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- **Despina Chatzivassiliou,** Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

This initiative is a contribution towards the

**New Democratic Pact for Europe**

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