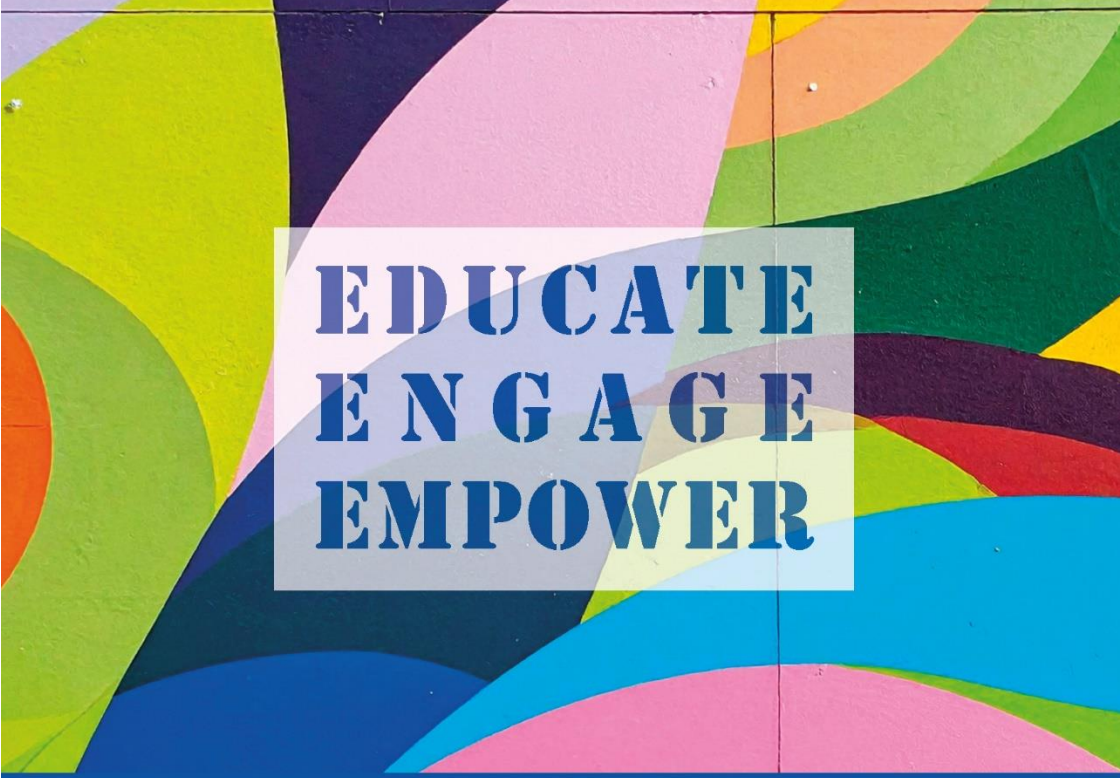


YOUTH SHAPING DEMOCRACY PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

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;

explore opportunities for further parliamentary action and cooperation, including through exchanges of experience and good practices between the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (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.

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
- **Judit Lannert,** Minister of Education and Children's Affairs, Hungary
- **Tanja Gonggrijp,** Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Moderator: Krisztián Kovács, Director for Foreign Relations, Hungarian National Assembly

Family photo

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

Moderator: **Péter Magyari,** 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, Greece
- **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

- **Yelyzaveta Yasko**, Third Vice-Chairperson of the PACE Special Committee on the New Democratic Pact, Ukraine
- **Dr. Petra Guasti, PhD**, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Institute of Political Studies, Charles University, Czech Republic
- **Xesc Mainzer**, Vice-Chairperson 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-Chairperson of the PACE Special Committee on the New Democratic Pact, Switzerland
- **Cristina Leston-Bandeira,** Chairperson 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

Moderator: **Marko Pavić,** PACE Member, Chairperson of the Croatian National Delegation to PACE

- **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
- **István Gyöngyösi,** Member of the National Assembly, Hungary
- **Kalypso Nicolaidis,** Chairperson in Global Affairs, European University Institute, Italy



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

- **Zanda 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 on opportunities for parliamentary action and cooperation**

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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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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