REJUVENATING POLITICS
Making democracy younger
RAJEUNIR LA POLITIQUE
Redynamiser la démocratie

THE CONGRESS COUNCIL OF EUROPE
LE CONGRÈS CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

7 November 2025

Call for applications for young people to take part in the 2026 edition of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities' "Rejuvenating Politics" initiative

As part of its "Rejuvenating Politics" initiative, the Congress of the Council of Europe invites young people aged 18 to 30 years old to:

- **take an active part, as a youth delegate, in its 50th (31 March-2 April 2026) and 51st (27-29 October 2026) sessions in Strasbourg, France**
- **develop their own grassroots project at home** (under the aegis of the Congress)

APPLICATIONS	**CONTACT**
The deadline for submitting completed applications to the Congress is **15 December 2025.** Late applications will not be accepted.	Table Office Congress of Local and Regional Authorities E-mail: congress.youth@coe.int

What is the Congress?

The Congress is a pan-European political assembly. Its members hold elective office at local or regional level and represent over 130 000 local and regional authorities in 46 European States. Its role is to promote local and regional democracy, improve local and regional governance and disseminate the standards and values of the Council of Europe throughout our continent's communities. It meets in session twice a year.

Like other political assemblies, such as national parliaments or local/regional councils, the sessions are formal gatherings where Congress members examine reports, hold thematic debates and adopt official texts. The latter take the form of recommendations and resolutions addressed to the local, regional and/or national authorities of Council of Europe member States or the Committee of Ministers.

To learn more about the Congress, please consult our website.

The Congress and youth participation

A precursor in integrating youth perspectives in the Council of Europe's work beyond youth-specific policies, since October 2014, the Congress has invited young people from different backgrounds – youth activists, youth workers, students, youth political leaders – who take an active interest in the work of the Council of Europe and the role of local and regional authorities to take part in its sessions and meetings, express their views in debates and exchange with Congress members on the issues on its agenda.

As an integral part of their participation, youth delegates have since 2016 also been required to develop their own projects at local and regional level in between the sessions.

Please consult our website for additional background on the Congress's youth delegates programme.

Participating in the Congress's work for one year

Being a Congress youth delegate is a unique opportunity to gain international experience as a part of a diverse group of young activists, to network and to make an impact by bringing youth perspectives to Congress debates. The participation of youth delegates in its work both highlights and helps to strengthen the Congress's continuing commitment to youth empowerment.

1. Participating as a youth delegate in the sessions

During the sessions, youth delegates sit in the hemicycle alongside the Congress members.

A two-day preparatory meeting is held prior to each session. This is not a training session but serves to familiarise youth delegates with the functioning of the Congress; candidates should already have the necessary public speaking skills, be able to prepare short speeches and be capable of analysing policy documents.

Youth delegates must commit to taking part in the whole of the two sessions in 2026:

- From Saturday 28 March (19.00) until the debriefing session on Thursday 2 April (17.00)
- From Saturday 24 October (19.00) until the debriefing session on Thursday 29 October (17.00)

A dinner will be organised before (28 March and 24 October 2026) and after (2 April and 29 October 2026) each session.

2. Developing and implementing projects between the sessions

Between the March and October sessions, youth delegates will be required to develop a local or regional project which may be related to the Congress's priorities or to thematic debates held by the Congress during its 2026 sessions. These projects may take different forms (conference, mobile application, presentation to school, podcast, ...). The summaries of the projects of the 2025 youth delegates give an indication of the range of possibilities that can be envisaged.

For the development of their projects, youth delegates will have the support of trainers to develop and assess their ideas through mentoring sessions.

The Congress does not provide funding for project development but does provide youth delegates with an introduction letter to act as a visiting card in their dealings with local or regional authorities. It may also provide information documents and other material, if needed.

3. Other events

There may also be possibilities during the year for some youth delegates to take part in other events organised by the Congress in or outside Strasbourg, such as its committee meetings, seminars or conferences, or to take part as a Congress youth delegate in other Council of Europe or external events.

Aims and objectives

By inviting young people from every member State to take part in its "Rejuvenating Politics" initiative, the Congress aims to give young people an opportunity to express their opinions directly to local and regional elected representatives, to ensure youth perspectives are heard, and to promote young people's ongoing participation in democratic processes both at international level and at home.

The specific objectives of the youth delegates programme are to:

- involve young people directly in all aspects of the Congress's work;
- make young people aware of the Congress's work and the tools it has developed to support youth participation;
- discuss with young people and raise the awareness of Congress members regarding how local and regional youth participation can be boosted;
- bring youth perspectives to all thematic debates within the Congress;
- motivate and empower youth delegates to multiply the information and experience acquired during the sessions on their return home, in particular through the development and implementation of their own projects at local and regional levels;

- share information about existing models of youth-led structures;
- inspire young people to spread the word about the Congress's work;
- promote co-operation between members of the Congress and youth delegates;
- show national delegations the importance of officially including more young people as members.

Programme

The entire youth delegates programme is compulsory. Youth delegates who do not take part in one or more of these aspects will be replaced by their national substitute delegate.

Compulsory activities include:
- participation in all the preparatory activities with the trainers, including possible online meetings, prior to each session;
- full attendance during both sessions (which includes the preparation days on the eve of each session and the evaluation meeting on the last afternoon of each session);
- participation in several meetings via videoconference (April - September) with trainers to prepare the grassroots project;
- implementation of the project between April and mid-September 2026.

Profile of candidates

All youth delegates should:
- be open, committed and motivated to develop and strengthen dialogue between young people and elected representatives at local/regional level;
- be aged between 18 and 30 years old on 31 December 2025;
- live in and hold the passport of one of the 46 Council of Europe member States;
- be active in youth work at local and regional levels;
- be available to engage **in the whole** of the activity, including the preparation of grassroots projects;
- have an interest in actively participating in policy-making at local and/or regional levels;
- be able to multiply the information obtained during the session on their return home;
- have good writing and public speaking skills;
- be committed to working in an intercultural team;
- speak English fluently.[1]

Candidates must **not** :
- be elected representatives, whether at local, regional, national or European level;
- have participated in the initiative previously.

Application procedure and selection of participants

Those wishing to apply to take part in the programme in 2026, including participating in the 50th and 51st Congress sessions, must do so by means of the online application form. **Participation in only one session is not possible.**

Please note that the application form includes detailed questions and may take some time to complete.

Before completing the application form, you should familiarise yourself with the text of the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life as revised in October 2025 (document CG(2025)49-14, pages 7-12)

Applicants must also submit via online link a short video of no more than 30 seconds, to support their application. The link to the video (title should contain only the applicant's name and country) should be sent together with the application. The video must remain accessible to the selection panel until 27 February 2026. Please note that **candidates should not present themselves on the video but**

[1] During the non-formal sessions organised alongside the official debates and committee meetings, the working language will be English.

must answer the question indicated in the application form. The video is an integral part of the application.

The deadline for submitting completed applications, including the short video, is 23:59 CET on **15 December 2025.**

The youth delegates will be appointed by a selection panel which includes the Congress Spokesperson on Youth, the youth trainers and two members of the Council of Europe's Advisory Council on Youth. The panel will ensure that the selected applicants represent a balanced group with regard to gender, cultural background and experience.

Applicants will be informed of the results of the selection procedure by **10 February 2026.**

Travel, subsistence and accommodation

The youth delegates' travel and subsistence expenses will be covered by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities according to the Council of Europe's rules.

Accommodation will be provided and paid for by the organisers, in single-occupancy or shared rooms according to availability. The organisers cannot cover the cost of accommodation elsewhere.

Please click here to complete the application form.