

European Youth Foundation Call for proposals for ad hoc youth initiatives “Living and building democracy” (2026.C3.C)

1. INTRODUCTION

This call for proposals is launched by the European Youth Foundation (EYF) of the Council of Europe to support youth initiatives that empower young people to learn about and actively engage in democracy and human rights.

2. SPECIFIC INFORMATION

2.1 Call objectives

This call aims to support ad hoc youth initiatives that contribute to the following objectives:

- Create space for young people to learn more about democracy and the role of human rights therein, in relation to specific challenges to democracies in the current European context.
- Allow young people to develop their attitudes, views and specifically their critical thinking for building a democratic culture, including when using the digital space.
- Equip young people with citizenship skills and ways to take active part in democratic processes and human rights promotion.

2.2 Types of activities

The activities that can be supported through these grants must respond to specific challenges young people face in engaging with democratic processes, such as challenges around misinformation and manipulation, disinformation and fake news, barriers to voting, limited participation in political and governance processes, etc. Initiatives need to demonstrate the relevance of the proposed intervention and explain how their initiative will tackle and overcome that specific challenge.

The initiatives that can be supported are awareness-raising and educational initiatives grounded in human rights education and education for democratic citizenship, with a strong focus on strengthening critical thinking of young people and fostering their participation in democratic processes and civic life, within a European/global context of erosion of democracy. The initiatives may include one or more workshops, training activities, awareness raising activities, or similar actions that directly engage young people in learning about democracy and human rights and learning how to be active therein. Initiatives should in principle be innovative and show an added value in terms of thematic focus and methodology for the target group and/or the applicant organisation.

The initiatives must show impact for young people and their local communities. They must have an **educational dimension** (for example, by exploring what democracy and human rights are, how a democracy functions, different ways how people can be involved in democracy, as well as the threats to democracy, and the links between democracy and human rights), as well as a **youth engagement dimension**, supporting and empowering young people to be part of democratic processes, youth organisations, civil society initiatives and other forms of participation.

It is expected that grantee organisations make use of the Council of Europe *acquis* and educational resources, such as [Compass – Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People](#) and other

[resources](#), as well as of the [European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life](#), as a policy framework.

2.3 Implementation period

The initiatives must start between 1 October and 31 December 2026 and have a duration of maximum 6 months.

Reporting requirements shall be completed within 2 months after the end of the project at the latest. Projects completed prior to the date of submission of the application will be automatically excluded.

2.4 Participants

Participants should be young people interested in taking part in such initiatives, and who have had limited or no prior opportunities to engage in similar actions.

Activities must involve participants:

- of whom at least 75% are not older than 30 years of age;
- residing in at least one Council of Europe member State (with the possibility of including participants from other States, if justified);
- with attention to the inclusion of young people with disabilities;
- with specific considerations for gender equality and social inclusion of young people.

Applications not complying with these criteria will not be considered.

2.5 Grant amount

Applicants may request a maximum grant of €8 000 (eight thousand euro). The application form includes an estimated budget which must be consistent, accurate, clear, complete and cost-effective, considering the activities proposed.

Each grantee must contribute to the project either by way of its own resources or by contribution from third parties. Co-financing may take the form of financial or human resources or in-kind contributions.

2.6 Ineligible activities

The following activities are excluded:

- operations of a commercial nature or profit-making ones;
- the purchase of land or buildings;
- the construction or renovation of buildings;
- the purchase of fixed equipment for buildings;
- tourism activities;
- scholarships;
- sports events and competitions;
- school exchanges;
- activities that are part of a school or university programme or that have a strictly vocational character;
- activities which are not related with the Council of Europe's work or priorities, and do not provide space to explore the Council of Europe's standards, approaches and resources;
- statutory meetings of youth organisations.

2.7 Funding conditions and reporting requirements

The funds for a grant shall be distributed as follows:

- 80 % will be paid to the grantee when the grant agreement between the grantee organisation and the European Youth Foundation is signed;

- the balance will be paid to the grantee organisation upon presentation and acceptance by the Council of Europe of the final narrative and financial reports of the project.

The grantee organisation must submit a narrative report and a financial report to the Foundation within 2 months after the end of the project. More information about reporting can be found in the [Guide to the EYF grants](#).

3. BUDGET AVAILABLE

The indicative available budget under this call for proposals is €200 000 (two hundred thousand euro). The European Youth Foundation intends to award 25 grants of a maximum amount of €8 000 (eight thousand euro) each. The European Youth Foundation reserves the right not to award all available funds, and/or to redistribute the available funds in a different manner depending on the project proposals received and on the outcome of the call for proposals.

4. HOW TO APPLY?

4.1 Registration and submitting applications

To apply for this call, applicants must be registered with the European Youth Foundation, as per the eligibility criteria below. Interested candidates who are not yet registered with the Foundation must first create an account and submit their registration request at support4youth.coe.int. Please be aware that registering with the Foundation may take up to 2 weeks. The applicant's registration must be validated by the EYF secretariat no later than the deadline of this call in order to apply.

For applicants who are not yet registered with the European Youth Foundation, the online granting system will be available for creating a new registration form for a youth organisation by end of July 2026. The system will not be available before this date for new registrations.

For applicants whose NGO was registered with the EYF in the previous online granting system (fej.coe.int), their data will be migrated to the new online granting system and they will be able to access the system by end of July 2026.

Registered applicants must submit their proposals within the European Youth Foundation's online granting system **before 1 September 2026, 23:59 CET**.

The proposal must include:

- a) the narrative application form duly filled in,
- b) the budget form duly filled in, that includes both the costs to be covered by the EYF grant and costs to be covered from other sources.

The applicant must submit the proposal in the EYF online granting system.

The proposals must be submitted in English or French.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

4.2 Questions and communication with applicants

General information can be found on the [website of the European Youth Foundation](#) and in the [Guide to the EYF grants](#).

Any questions regarding this call for proposals must be submitted in English or French at the latest one week before the application deadline. Questions shall be sent exclusively to eyf@coe.int with the following reference in the subject line: "Question about EYF youth initiatives call 2026.C3.C". The EYF secretariat will compile the questions and answers relating to the call and publish them on its website.

The EYF may contact applicants during the assessment period, i.e. between the application deadline and the completion of the technical review of the project proposals. This process of dialogue will be carried out through email communication. When clarifications or adjustments are needed, the EYF will give clear instructions and allow sufficient time to respond. The EYF will also remain available to support applicants with any questions they may have.

4.3 Deadline for submission

Applications must be received **by 1 September 2026, at 23:59 CET**. Applications received after the above-mentioned date will not be considered.

5. ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

The EYF secretariat will assess the proposals and prepare a report for review by the Programming Committee on Youth. The Programming Committee takes the final decision on the grants to be awarded by the Foundation.

The procedure shall be based on the underlying principles of grant award procedures, which are transparency, non-retroactivity, non-cumulative awards, not-for-profit, co-financing and non-discrimination, in accordance with the [Operational regulations of the European Youth Foundation](#).

Applicants and their projects shall fulfil all of the following criteria:

5.1 Eligibility criteria

In order to be eligible for a grant, an applicant must:

1. be registered in the granting system of the European Youth Foundation as a local youth organisation or as a national youth organisation;
2. have a bank account that can accept euros;
3. have sufficient financial capacity (stable and sufficient sources of funding) to maintain its activity throughout the period for which the grant is awarded and to participate by way of its own resources (including human resources or in-kind contributions)¹;
4. have sufficient operational and professional capacity, including staff and volunteers, to carry out activities described in its project proposal².

Multiple applications for the same proposal are not allowed and shall lead to the exclusion of all applications concerned.

5.2 Exclusion criteria:

Applicants shall be excluded from the grant award procedure where they:

- a. have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
- b. are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any such situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
- c. have received a judgment with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes serious professional misconduct;

¹ The Council of Europe shall have full discretion in determining whether applicants are considered to have sufficient financial capacity in light of the complexity of the project/action proposed.

² The Council of Europe shall have full discretion in determining whether applicants are considered to have sufficient operational and professional capacity in light of the complexity of the project/action proposed.

- d. do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of the country where they are established;
- e. are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
- f. have been involved in mismanagement of Council of Europe funds or public funds;
- g. are in a situation of actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest that cannot be managed to the secretariat's satisfaction.

To meet these criteria, organisations will be asked to provide a declaration on honour when submitting their application in the EYF online granting system. The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask applicants at a later stage to supply additional documents related to the above-mentioned criteria.

5.3 Award criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Relevance and added value of the proposal regarding the objectives of the call (40%).
2. Quality, clarity and completeness of the proposal (32%).
3. Cost effectiveness and completeness of foreseen budget (16%).
4. Expertise / experience of the organisation, partners and project team (12%).

6. NOTIFICATION OF THE DECISION AND SIGNATURE OF GRANT AGREEMENTS

Once the selection process is completed, all applicants will be informed in writing of the final decision of the Programming Committee on Youth concerning their respective applications. Selected grantees will then be invited to sign a grant agreement with the European Youth Foundation.

7. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

Phases	Indicative timing
Publishing of the call	30 June 2026
EYF online granting system accessible for applicants registered with the EYF and for new applicants for submitting first their registration	End of July 2026
Deadline for submitting applications	1 September 2026, 23.59 CEST
Assessment and dialogue with applicants	2 September – 30 September 2026
Meeting of the Programming Committee on Youth where the decision on the grants are taken	By 31 October 2026
Information to applicants on the results of the award procedure	By 5 November 2026
Signature of the grant agreements	15 November 2026
Beginning of the implementation period	Between 1 December 2026 and and31 December 2026
End of the implementation period	Latest by 31 December 2027
Reporting on grants	Up to 29 February 2028 (2 months after the projects end date)