

Youth Perspectives in Contemporary Europe

New Tasks for Research and Policy

International conference

SCOTLAND HOUSE
20-21 OCTOBER 2025



Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Day 1: Monday, 20 October

10:30 - 11:00 Registration

11:00 - 11:30 Opening and introduction

Clotilde Talleu, Manager of the Youth Partnership

11:30 - 12:30 Youth Realities in Today's Europe: why research matters for policy and practice

- Tobias Flessenkemper, Head of the Youth Department, Council of Europe
- Karen Vandeweghe, Deputy Head of Unit of the unit B.3 'Youth and Volunteer Solidarity', Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission
- Tom Matthew, Board Member, European Youth Forum

This opening panel will explore the relevance of youth research in today's rapidly changing European and global context. It will highlight its added value for youth policy and practice and outline the research agendas and perspectives of partner institutions and youth organisations.

12:30 - 13:30 Lunch

13:30 - 17:00 Young People in Democratic Societies

PART 1: Youth participation and civic space

Shrinking civic space, democratic backsliding, and increasing constraints on civil society are directly impacting participation and activism across Europe. Young people, in particular, are facing growing barriers to fully engaging in democratic and civic life. In response, European institutions are reinforcing their commitment to democracy through initiatives such as the Council of Europe's New Democratic Pact and the European Democracy Shield.

This session will begin with a global perspective on youth participation before turning to the European context. It will present the current state of youth civic space in Europe and foster a conversation among public authorities, youth organisations, young people, and researchers, exploring key challenges, promising practices, and emerging research needs.

13:30 - 14:15 Setting the scene at global and European levels

Presentations (parallel sessions):

- Global Youth Participation Index, Ana Mosiashvili European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) and Sarah Pickard, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle
- Current state of youth civic space in Europe, results of the study conducted by the Youth Partnership, Gilda Isernia, Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR)

14:15 - 15:15 Breakout discussions

Participants will share experiences and initiatives, discuss challenges, and identify future research needs to strengthen knowledge, protection, and empowerment of youth civil society.

15:15 - 15:30 Restitution in plenary

15:30 - 16:00 Coffee break

16:00 - 17:00 Shrinking civic space for youth organisations

17:00 - 18:30 Reception / Cocktail

Day 2: Tuesday, 21 October

09:00 - 09:30 Welcome coffee

09:30 - 10:15 EU Youth Report: What do we know about young people in Europe?

Key pointers and perspectives, Giulia Paolini and Diana Antonello, EACEA

10:15 - 12:30 Young People in Democratic Societies

PART 2: Youth mainstreaming and youth perspectives in policymaking

Integrating the voices, rights, and interests of young people into policymaking is gaining momentum across Europe. This shift is being reinforced at the European level through initiatives such as the Council of Europe's forthcoming Reference Framework for a Youth Perspective – a key outcome of the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government – and the European Commission's ongoing work on Youth Mainstreaming and the Youth Check, as part of the broader implementation of the EU Youth Strategy. These policy frameworks are also designed to support member States in embedding youth perspectives into policymaking at national and local levels.

This session will explore these developments at both institutional and national levels, drawing on the latest findings from Youth Partnership studies. It will provide a space to reflect on emerging challenges, share promising practices, and identify priorities for future support and cooperation.

10:15 - 11:00 Case studies at national and local levels across Europe: successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Marko Kovacic (PEYR) and Frederike Hofmann-van de Poll (PEYR)

Presentation of the Youth Partnership's study "Learning from national and local approaches to youth mainstreaming and the use of youth perspective in policy making across Europe", and upcoming Youth Knowledge book "Angles and standpoints: demystifying the concepts of 'youth perspective' & 'youth mainstreaming'".

11:00 - 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 - 12:30 Breakout discussion

Participants will engage in facilitated discussions to exchange practices and experiences, explore concrete support needs, and collaboratively identify priorities for advancing youth perspectives in policymaking at all levels.

12:30 - 12:45 Restitution in plenary

12:45 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 15:00 Panel discussion: youth mainstreaming and youth perspective in international and European organisations

Presentation of the study "Youth Mainstreaming: The International Perspective", from the Youth Partnership, by Tomaz Dezelan, University of Ljubljana and Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR), and discussion with Tobias Flessenkemper, Head of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, and Biliana Sirakova, EU Youth Coordinator, the European Commission.

Day 2: Tuesday, 21 October

15:00 - 17:15 Young people's access to rights and services: youth mental health and experiences of rural youth

Improving the living conditions of young people remains a core priority for both the Council of Europe and the European Commission. This topic has been consistently highlighted by member States and youth organisations, particularly in relation to pressing challenges such as housing, the cost of living, education, employment, and access to essential services like mental health care. Special attention is needed for vulnerable and marginalised youth, who often face systemic barriers to inclusion and participation.

This session will explore key findings from two recent Youth Partnership studies, one on the mental health and well-being of young people, and the other on the experiences and needs of youth living in rural areas.

15:00 - 15:15 Technical break

15:15 - 16:15 Parallel breakout sessions

- **Mental health and well-being of young people**, Veronica Stefan

Presentation of the study followed by a facilitated discussion on key findings, challenges, and policy implications.

- **Rural Youth: experiences and needs**, Francisco Simoes

Presentation of the study followed by a facilitated discussion on the realities, challenges, and policy responses relevant to rural youth.

16:15 - 16:45 Coffee break

16:45 - 17:00 Restitution in plenary

17:00 - 17:15 Presentation of findings of the Rapporteur, Howard Williamson

17:15 - 17:30 Conclusions and closing remarks, Clotilde Talleu, Manager, Youth Partnership



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