

International Youth Seminar and Policy Symposium on the Active Political Participation of National Minority Youth

17-18 June 2024, European Youth Centre Budapest

Background to the event

On 4 October 2023 The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2023\)9](#) on the active political participation of national minority youth. The Recommendation builds on the findings of the [Study on the active political participation of national minority youth in Council of Europe member States](#).

In May 2023, the European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB) already hosted an [event foreseeing](#) the adoption of the Recommendation. In his [welcoming remarks](#), [Deputy Secretary General Bjørn Berge](#), emphasised that “A focus on young people from national minorities, encouraging them to participate in politics – And take part in the public life of their country. This is about the very fabric of a democratic society – safeguarding the rights of everyone. It is about treating national minorities as equals, who will share with all others the responsibility for shaping their shared future,” he said then.

Hungarian Secretary of State for Security Policy and Energy Security Peter Sztaray and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian National Assembly Zsolt Németh opened the conference. Keynote addresses were delivered by Secretary of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion of the Council of Europe Wolfram Bechtel, and Chairperson on the Programming Committee on Youth of the Council on Youth Pia Šlogar.

The new Recommendation contributes to the implementation of decisions taken at the 4th Council of Europe Summit of Heads of State and Government (Reykjavík, 16-17 May 2023), in particular the [Reykjavík Declaration - “United around our values”](#) and the Reykjavík Principles for

Democracy, in which member states committed to “invest in a democratic future by ensuring that everyone is able to play their role in democratic processes” and “ensure full, equal and meaningful participation in political and public life for all, in particular for women and girls, free from violence, fear, harassment, hate speech and hate crime, as well as discrimination based on any ground.” As the Reykjavik Declaration also makes clear “youth participation in decision-making processes improves the effectiveness of public policies and strengthens democratic institutions through open dialogue.”

Objectives of the event

The 2024 youth seminar and policy symposium aims at following up on last year’s event by presenting the since-then adopted Recommendation in detail to policy and decisionmakers, academic practitioners and members of the Budapest-based diplomatic community. Most importantly, it will also bring together young people belonging to national minorities from several Council of Europe member states for a 1.5 day training seminar built around the themes of the recommendation and utilizing the Council of Europe Youth Department’s know-how in facilitating meaningful youth participation on local, national and European levels.

Hungary’s presidency of the European Council in the second half of 2024 provides an additionally relevant policy angle to the subject of national minorities and their political participation. Vitalizing the EU enlargement processes in Western Balkans and beyond is one of the main priorities of the Hungarian EU presidency. Youth political participation, as well as the full involvement of national minorities are essential

building blocks for success in this endeavor. The event will therefore also make an attempt to look at the Recommendation and its messages from this special point of view as well.

The youth component of the event will serve to present the recommendation to its key audience and to reflect together with young people on a potential road map to its fullest implementation in the coming years. The youth participants will also have the opportunity to develop their own proposals and projects and benefit from learning about the various funding opportunities provided by the European Youth Foundation as well as other potential donors. Finally, the participants will also be able to share their aspirations and proposals for strengthening democracy through meaningful youth participation during the Policy Symposium following the Youth Seminar. Finally, the Council of Europe 75th anniversary event will officially close the program of the two-day event.

The event is co-organised by the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of

Hungary, with contributions to the program by the National Youth Council of Hungary.

Organisers & Participants

- Council of Europe
 - Youth Department (EYCB, European Youth Foundation)
 - Anti-Discrimination Department
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary
- National Youth Council of Hungary

Youth Participants

Youth participants from Council of Europe member states belonging to indigenous national minorities. Focus will be on national minority youth from Hungary, Hungarian minority youth from neighboring countries, national minority youth from other Council of Europe member states (with particular attention on pre-accession countries in the EU neighborhood).

Draft Programme

Day 1. Monday, 17 June 2024 Youth Seminar

9:30 – Opening session

Marcos ANDRADE – Deputy Director, European Youth Centre Budapest

Zsolt NÉMETH – President, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Hungarian National Assembly, Head of the Hungarian Delegation to the PACE

Péter KOVÁCS – President, National Youth Council of Hungary

10h:00 – Session 1: Presentation of the Recommendation on the Active Political Participation of National Minority youth

Prof. Emma LANTSCHNER, associate professor, University of Graz and member of the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

11:00 – 11:30 - Coffee-Break

11:30 – Session 2: Road map for the implementation of the Recommendation [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2023\)9](#) in Hungary and in other Member States

- The Right for Political Participation
- The Space for Political Participation
- The Means for Political Participation

13:00 – Lunch

14:30 – Session 3: Specific roles and guidelines for political actors and stakeholders of the Recommendation

Working Groups

16:00 – 16:30 – Coffee Break

16:30 – Working Groups (cont.)

19:30 – Dinner

Day 2. Tuesday, 18 June 2024

Morning – Youth Seminar (cont'd.)

9:30 – Presentation of the outcomes of the working groups

10:00 – **Session 4** Opportunities, means and support for active political participation of national minority youth.

Mara GEORGESCU – European Youth Foundation

11:00 – 11:30 – **Coffee-Break**

11:30 – **Session 4:** Opportunities, means and support for active political participation of national minority youth (cont.)

12:30 – Closing of Youth Seminar

13:00 – **Lunch**

Day 2. Afternoon – Policy Symposium

14:00 – **Arrival of guests & Coffee**

14:30 – Welcome Remarks

***Péter SZTÁRAY** – State Secretary for Security Policy and Energy Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade*

***Bjørn BERGE** – Deputy Secretary General – Council of Europe (via video link)*

15:00 – Keynote Presentations of the Recommendation on the Active Political Participation of National Minority Youth

***Prof. Emma LANTSCHNER**, associate professor, University of Graz and member of the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.*

15:30 – 17:00 – Presentation of the outcomes of the Youth Seminar followed by Policy Roundtable

Outcomes of the Youth Seminar – Presentation by the rapporteur **Dr. Edina TORDAI**

Policy Roundtable with

Louis ALBERT-BECKER, President, Youth of European Nationalities

László GUBIK, Via Nova Youth Policy Organisation, Slovakia

Dóra SZILÁGYI, Foreign Policy Advisor, Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, Romania

Xesc MAINZER, Member of the Advisory Council on Youth, Council of Europe (via video link)

Krisztián KARPINECZ, Youth section of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association – Ukraine

Moderator: **Balint MOLNAR** – Executive Director, European Youth Centre Budapest, Council of Europe

17:00 – Closing Remarks

***Ferenc KALMÁR** – Special Envoy to the Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary*

***Balint MOLNAR** – Executive Director, European Youth Centre Budapest*

17:30 – 20:30 – **Council of Europe 75th Anniversary Reception**