



Call for applications from young people to take part in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities' 27th session as part of the national delegations

13 to 16 October 2014, Strasbourg (France)

Background

“Conscious that direct involvement of youth in the affairs of society remains essential, as a safeguard for democracy and for sustainable development in the municipalities and regions”,¹ the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe has decided to devote a large part of its two sessions in 2014 to the theme “Empowering youth: a shared responsibility for cities and regions”. The aim is twofold: to generate exchanges between the local and regional politicians represented in the Congress on the participation of young people, as actors of local and regional democracy; and exchanges between these elected representatives and young people.

During its 26th session (25 to 27 March 2014), targeted debates were held on issues relating to youth and democracy on: “Is there a real place for young people in local and regional democracy?”; “Fostering youth employment through education and training: role and best practices within regions in Europe”; “Empowering Roma youth participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels”; and “Youth participation-Voting at 16?”.

For its 27th session (14 to 16 October 2014), the Bureau proposes to invite one young person to participate in the Congress' work and debates, as part of each of its 47 national delegations.

Aims and objectives

By inviting a number of young people to take part actively in its 27th session, the Congress, in close co-operation with the Youth Department and the European Youth Foundation (EYF) of the Council of Europe, aims to create a space for dialogue between the youth delegates and local and regional elected representatives in order to:

- enhance youth participation at local and regional levels by exploring the concept of youth participation, the instruments used to promote it and what is needed to achieve real youth participation;
- share their understanding of their respective roles in policy making at local and regional levels;
- encourage young people to enter into politics and to stand for election at local and regional levels;
- convince member states to include young people in their national delegations to the Congress, both as full and substitute members;
- promote co-operation between elected representatives and young people in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect and encourage the exchange of good practices as well as promotion of existing models of youth-led structures.

¹ Congress Recommendation 128 (2003) on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life.

The specific objectives are to:

- enable a number of young people to be a part of the 47 national delegations to the Congress, for the period of the session;
- allow these youth delegates to take active part in the debates organised during the 27th session and in the meetings of the Congress's three committees;
- raise the youth delegates' and Congress members' awareness of the Council of Europe's and Congress' policies on participation and youth, notably the co-management system;
- ensure an exchange of views between the youth delegates and Congress members on the importance of dialogue and youth participation in policy making, how to achieve them, the challenges posed and the solutions available, including non-formal learning processes.

Partners

The participation of youth delegates in the 27th session has been made possible thanks to the close co-operation between the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. Their participation and the programme are being jointly financed by the Congress, the European Youth Foundation and the Youth Department. The programme is being devised jointly by the Secretariat of the Congress's Current Affairs Committee, the European Youth Foundation and the Education and Training Division of the Youth Department.

Programme

The youth delegates will be invited to take part in the debates organised during the plenary sittings and the sessions of the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. In addition, they will be able to participate in the meetings of the three Congress committees: the Monitoring Committee, the Governance Committee and the Current Affairs Committee.

An introductory programme will be organised for the youth delegates, which will be led by professional youth trainers from the Council of Europe's pool of specialised trainers, on the eve of the session. Opportunities for exchanges with Congress members in more informal sessions will be arranged, for example on Monday afternoon. A debriefing will be held on Thursday afternoon in the presence of the youth delegates, members of the Congress Bureau, heads of the national delegations, and other Congress members.

Participants should arrive, therefore, on 13 October 2014 and depart on 17 October in the morning.

Profile of participants

The youth delegates, one per national delegation, should meet the following criteria:

- be open, committed and motivated to develop and strengthen dialogue between young people and elected representatives;
- be between 16 and 30 years old;
- have been resident in one of the Council of Europe member states for a minimum of five years;²
- be a member of a local or regional youth council or parliament, or a local or regional elected representative, or a representative of a youth NGO, or a youth-led structure;
- be available and motivated to engage in the whole of the activity from Monday 13 October to Thursday 16 October at 17.30;
- 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 at home;
- speak one of the languages interpreted during the session (English, French, German, Italian, Russian).³

² In line with the provisions of the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (CETS No.144).

³ During the non-formal sessions organised alongside the official debates and committee meetings, the working language will be English.

Application procedure and selection of participants

Those wishing to apply to take part in the 27th Congress session must do so by means of the application form attached to this call.

Applicants are invited to submit a short video, via YouTube, of no more than 45 seconds, to support their application. The link to the video should be sent together with the application.

The deadline for submitting completed applications is **Wednesday 4 June 2014**.

Completed application forms must be sent to: youthsession2014@coe.int.

The youth delegates will be selected by a panel designated by the Congress's Bureau and the Joint Council on Youth. The panel will ensure the selected applicants represent a balanced group with regard to gender, cultural background, experience, etc.

Applicants will be informed of the results of the selection procedure by 30 June 2014.

Travel, subsistence and accommodation

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

Accommodation will be in the European Youth Centre (EYC), in single-occupancy or shared rooms according to availability. A welcome dinner will be provided on Monday 13 October in the EYC.



Application form

**To take part in the Congress' 27th session
as part of the national delegations**

13 to 16 October 2014, Strasbourg (France)

Personal details

First name	
Last name	
Date and place of birth	
Gender (M/F/other)	
Nationality	
Since when have you been living in your current country of residence?	
Address, post code, town, country	
E-mail	
Telephone	
Working language	
Activity/profession	
Name of organisation/authority/structure	

Experience and motivation (in no more than 50 words for each reply)

What is your personal motivation to take part in the Congress's 27th session?	
What experience do you have of representing young people in relations with local and regional authorities, for example in NGOs, youth associations, youth councils, etc?	
What do you expect to be able to contribute to the session?	
What do you expect to learn from this experience?	

How will you disseminate the information obtained during the session on your return home?	
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Your views on youth participation and dialogue

Why are youth participation and dialogue at local and regional levels important to you and young people in general?	
Please describe briefly your experience of making your voice heard by local and regional authorities or by society at large; the local/regional that structures exist in your area?	
What challenges have you faced or do you face and how have you overcome them?	
Which innovative, diverse and fresh ideas/projects do you or your organisation use, in co-operation with local media, as a new form of youth participation?	
Is there any additional information you feel may be relevant to your application?	

Practical questions

Do you have any special needs or requirements, for example dietary, medical, allergies, disability, etc?	
If you are invited to take part in the session, will you require assistance in obtaining a visa for France?	

Please return completed application forms to youthsession2014@coe.int, by Wednesday 4 June 2014 at the latest.