



The Congress  
  
Le Congrès



# EUROPEAN FORUM OF YOUTH MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

*1<sup>st</sup> session*

*The challenges of youth participation in local democracy*

**Ankara (Turkey)**  
**From the 27th June to 1st July 2013**

**Program Draft**  
*(Version of 13<sup>th</sup> May)*

## 1) European Forum of Youth Municipal Councils. General description

In times of crisis an active democratic participation of young Europeans has become a major concern in Europe. We can notice a general decline of electoral participation in the last generation. Democratic participation of youth and its role in times of crisis became a matter of numerous concerns. Researches and recommendations of the European Commission, of the Council of Europe institutions (like, for example, “Youth and democracy: the changing face of youth political engagement”, “The young generation sacrificed: social, economic and political implications of the financial crisis”) are widely discussed through the European platforms.

However, “local and regional authorities have the advantage of being closest to citizens and thus are better placed to enter into a genuine dialogue and partnership with the people living in their territories. In this way, their policies can be truly democratic, relevant and effective because they are based on their young citizens’ needs”<sup>1</sup>.

*In this context the role of Youth Municipal Councils is important in term of representation of interests, needs and initiatives of young people. In order to discuss difficulties of participation on local level and to extend the question of youth representation, Cojep International presents its initiative to create the EUROPEAN FORUM OF YOUTH MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, the instance that will join youth representatives from 47 states of the Council of Europe.*

The mission of the Forum is to treat the current problematics of youth participation on the municipal level, specific for each region questions. It would be a wide network of Youth Councils across the Europe. This structure will realize the reports and studies on youth in Europe and establish effective cooperation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. The Forum will make easier access and broadcasting to young people of decisions taken by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on subjects concerning them, will promote European values and principal documents of the Council of Europe on youth issues like, for example, the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. The Council of Europe system of co-management will serve a model for the Forum’s functioning. The Forum would become a bridge between young citizens and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities which would use instruments worked out within the European institutes (like the Code of Good Practice on Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process).

The Forum will consist of the elected by all participants Bureau with thematic Commissions for the research and statistic work and setting of sectoral priorities. The permanent Secretary will ensure an everyday administrative functioning, coordination of the Forum work, organisation of meetings etc.<sup>2</sup> As project leader as well as member of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe and with headquarter in Strasbourg, Cojep International is committed to ensure the functioning of the Secretariat. The membership in the Forum would be open under some criterias for all Youth Councils of the Council of Europe member states. During meetings of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe young representatives will organize common activities in order to establish a dialogue with deputies from their communes.

As an initiator of this project Cojep International has found partners in Turkey, Belgium, Russia and other countries of the Council of Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> *Youth and democracy: the changing face of youth political engagement.* This explanatory memorandum (adopted by the Current Affairs Committee on 20 March 2012) is based on a study prepared by the Council of Europe consultants Prof Dr Helmut WILLEMS, Dipl. Soz. Andreas HEINEN and Dipl. Päd. Christiane MEYERS from the University of Luxembourg’s Integrative Research Unit on Social and Individual Development (INSIDE).

<sup>2</sup> More detailed information will be communicated later.

## 2) 1<sup>st</sup> session of the Forum in Ankara

For the first activity of the Forum Cojep International proposes to organize the session in **Ankara (Turkey) from June 27<sup>th</sup> to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 following the Current Affairs Committee of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of the Europe**. This Forum would bring together representatives of the Youth Municipal Councils of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe.

**The aim of the Forum** is to favour and encourage the Youth participation in local democracies by using principles and methods worked out within the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Council of Europe.

### **Our objectives are following:**

- To draw attention to the importance of youth participation in local democracies;
- To discuss the difficulties of youth participation in local democracies and how to enlarge their representation;
- To allow the representatives of Municipal Youth Councils from across Europe to share their experience and good practices for an effective youth citizenship;
- To ensure through workshops and conferences a training for young delegates on the improvement of youth participation concentrating on democratic conscience;
- To make easier for young people an access and broadcasting of decisions taken by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on subjects concerning them.

**The specific objectives** of the first session concern the following points:

- Development and adoption of the Declaration establishing the Forum;
- Preparation of the Forum's Action Plan and general strategies;
- Creation of formal and informal relationships with efficient collaboration between the Forum and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Council of Europe;
- Decision taking on the Second session of the Forum.

### **Organizers and partners of the Forum:**

- Cojep International
- With the support of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
- Ministry of Youth and Sports of Turkey
- Greater Municipality of Ankara (To be confirmed)
- Municipality of Altındağ (To be confirmed)
- Turkish delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- NGO WODEF

### **Participants**

There would be 47 participants, representatives of the Youth Municipal Councils from 47 member states of the Council of Europe.

A call for applications will be published and all 47 national delegations to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities will be asked to select participants.

Every participant should:

- be aged between 18-30;
- be resident in one of the Council of Europe's member states;
- have good knowledge of English;
- be committed to act as a multiplier of the Forum's idea;
- be willing to participate in all activities foreseen for the whole duration of the Forum programme;
- be a member of the Youth Municipal Council or similar structure, an organism active in favouring of youth participation on local and regional levels;
- be ready to contribute to the Forum's idea further development;
- have an experience in youth participation in local democracies.

**Working languages**

Two working languages of the Forum are English and Turkish. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided by the organizers of the Forum.

**Organisation of the work on the Forum**

Forum themes will be dealt in the context of the commitment of young people in local democracy through the prism of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Council of Europe.

The plenary sessions will place the discussion in the context of the experience and activities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. The workshops will highlight the practical experience of different municipalities and Youth Municipal Councils, exchange of experience.

Each workshop will be led by a moderator and four speakers. The introduction to the theme of each workshop will be conducted by experts. The workshops will be conducted by methods of interactive and participatory work. Each workshop will provide practical conclusions for youth participation helps to strengthen local democracy.

The final workshop would work for the development of the Declaration and the Action Plan.

**Financial and technical conditions of participation**

All participation fees (travel expenses, accommodation, food) will be covered by organizers. Visa and insurance fees should be covered by participant or sending organization. If needed the organizers can prepare an invitation letter to be presented to consular structures.

Other details will be communicated later.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE DEADLINE IS 10<sup>TH</sup> OF JUNE, 2013.**

**Please, send APPLICATION FORM with SUPPORT LETTER  
from the national delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to  
cojep.relations.int@gmail.com**

*For further information please contact Ms. Uliana IVANOVA*

*Tel.: +33 (0)6 28 61 50 67*

*Mail: [cojep.relations.int@gmail.com](mailto:cojep.relations.int@gmail.com)*

## ***First day***

Arrival of participants and registration

19.00 **Welcome reception offered by the Municipalities of Ankara**

## ***Second day***

09.00 – 10.00 Official opening

**Mr. Melih GÖKÇEK**

Mayor of Ankara (to be confirmed)

Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (to be confirmed)

**Mr. Suat KILIÇ (to be confirmed)**

Minister of Youth and Sports of Turkey

**Mrs. Gaye DOGANOGLU**

Head of the Turkish Delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

**Mr. Ali GEDİKOĞLU**

President of Cojep International

**Mr. Hamdi SICAR**

General Secretary of NGO WODEF(Partner of the project in Ankara)

10.00 – 10.30 Presentation of the Forum of Youth Municipal Councils

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee-break

11.00 – 12.30 Plenary session

**Round table: Share the power, give the responsibilities: towards greater political participation of youth**

*Moderator:*

**Mr. Kadir GÜZLE**

Municipal Advisor of the city of Obernai

*Experts and speakers:*

**Mrs. Andrée BUCHMANN**

Vice-President of the French Delegation to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

**Mr. Feyzullah KIYIKLI**

Deputy of the National Assembly of the Turkish Republic

Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (to be confirmed)

12.30 – 13.00 Presentation of workshops

13.00 - 14.30 Lunch break

14.30 - 18.30 Thematic workshops

<b>Workshop 1</b>	<b>The aims and obstacles of a greater youth participation in political life</b>
<i>Moderator</i>	<b>Mr. Enes ATEŞ</b> President of Cojep Germany
<i>Speakers</i>	Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (to be confirmed)  <b>Ms. Maria PASCHOU</b> Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth (to be confirmed)  <b>Mr. Murtaza YETIS</b> Deputy of the National Assembly of Turkey  <b>Mr. Ahmet MURAT</b> President of the Youth Municipal Council of the city of Konya
<i>Assistant</i>	Member of Cojep International secretariat
<p>European societies are faced with changing of their demographic structure related to an aging population. These changing societies are called to reflect on the consequences they would be confronted, in particular, the reduction of the young population.</p> <p>This fact will seriously disrupt the impact of youth on the political life. Their influence will be reduced. This may marginalize young people in society.</p> <p>To prevent this development, it is essential to reflect on the ways of participation that will make possible a strong integration of young people. And most importantly, we must remove all the existing barriers.</p>	

<b>Workshop 2</b>	<b>Threats and benefits of new forms of youth participation: the Internet and social networks</b>
<i>Moderator</i>	<b>Mr. Ali GUNES</b> President of Cojep Turkey, Press and information representative of the Prime Minister of Turkey
<i>Speakers</i>	Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (to be confirmed)  <b>Mr. Jean-Marie HEYDT</b> President of the INGO Conference of the Council of Europe  Representative of the Turkish Ministry of Youth and Sports  <b>Mr. Mehmet DUMEN</b> President of the World Academy for Local Government and Democracy
<i>Assistant</i>	Member of Cojep International secretariat
<p>It is often said that young people show a growing disinterest about social and political life of the society in which they live. However, this is not completely correct. The traditional or classical participation seems not to respond any more to the expectations of young people.</p> <p>But the observation of the behavior of young people in new media technologies and social networks clearly demonstrate the existence of new forms of involvement, commitment and even protest. The example of the «Arab Spring Revolution» significantly demonstrates the role that can play these instruments.</p> <p>The future of our local democracies depends in part on answers to be given to the needs of alternative youth participation.</p>	

19.00 – 20.00            Dinner  
20.00                    Cultural activities

### ***Third Day***

09.00 – 10.30	Follow-up of thematic workshops
10.45 – 12.00	Restitution of the workshops and summary
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.30	Plenary session

#### **Round table : How to promote exchanges between municipal youth councils in Europe and encourage youth participation?**

*Moderator :*

**Mr. Aleksander SOKOLOV**

Head of the Inter-Commission Working Group of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation on International Cooperation and Public Diplomacy

*Experts and speakers :* Representative of the The European Steering Committee for Youth of the Council of Europe (to be confirmed)

Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (to be confirmed)

Representative of the Turkish Ministry of European Affaires

15.30 – 16.00	Pause
16.00 – 19.00	Work on final Declaration and development of the Action Plan
19.00 – 20.00	<b>Closing session</b>

### ***Fourth day***

**Cultural visit of Ankara**

### ***Fifth day***

Departure of participants