



Doc. 16360

16 March 2026

Youth movements for democracy

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2299 (2025)

Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2299 \(2025\)](#) “Youth movements for democracy” and forwarded it to the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) and the Steering Committee on Democracy (CDDEM) for information and possible comments.
2. The Committee of Ministers shares the Parliamentary Assembly’s view that young people play a crucial role in defending and renewing democracy across Europe. The 4th Summit of the Council of Europe (Reykjavík, May 2023) and the Reykjavík Declaration reaffirmed youth participation as a cornerstone of inclusive democratic societies. The 10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Malta, 8-9 October 2025) further renewed commitments to youth participation and adopted a Declaration calling for youth policy development with, by, and for young people. It also adopted the Resolution on the Council of Europe Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective, which sets out how to ensure young people’s perspectives are integrated into deliberations across the Organisation and across all policy areas in member States.
3. The Committee of Ministers recalls that, in its decisions of 21 January 2026, following up on the 10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, it tasked the relevant youth statutory bodies (CMJ) with identifying the necessary measures to continue supporting the ongoing integration of a youth perspective in intergovernmental and other deliberations of the Organisation, as well as appropriate and flexible steps to support member States in integrating a youth perspective into national policies and processes.
4. Acknowledging the importance of integrating young people’s perspectives, views and expectations into policy-making processes, the Committee of Ministers also tasked the youth statutory bodies with carrying out: (i) a study on the need for and feasibility of a new instrument to consolidate and update the Council of Europe’s acquis in the youth field; (ii) a study examining the experience of countries that have lowered the voting age to 16; and (iii) preparations for a feasibility study on the creation of a third venue of the European Youth Centre in the Black Sea region. It also notes that the CDDEM is preparing a set of guidelines aimed at enhancing the participation in elections of women, girls, young people and vulnerable groups.
5. The Committee of Ministers highlights that, to reflect the multiple levels of governance, it has adopted the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life in the form of a recommendation to member States, [CM/Rec\(2026\)3](#). In doing so, it joins the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in responding to the concerns and hopes of young people today, contributing to the sustainability, inclusiveness, and resilience of democratic societies. The follow-up to the implementation of Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2025\)3](#) on the social, economic, and political participation of rural youth by the CMJ, for instance, is part of the effort to ensure inclusive youth policies. The parameters to facilitate the implementation of the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy elaborated by the CDDEM also address youth empowerment. The CDDEM guidance note to enhance civil society participation in the Council of Europe’s intergovernmental work emphasises the need for a youth intersectional perspective in engagement strategies and processes to ensure that young people can participate meaningfully.

1. Adopted at the 1554th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (12 March 2026).



6. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers underlines the importance of Council of Europe policy and its instruments, namely the co-management system which remains a unique model for involving young people in decision making and serves as an example for both member States and international organisations; the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, living spaces for youth movements and organisations to learn about, exchange and practice Council of Europe values; the European Youth Foundation, which sustains an independent, capable, and diverse youth civil society that carries these values into communities across Europe.

7. The Committee also notes that additional tools are in place to ensure meaningful participation such as the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card; co-operation programmes, including the Youth for Democracy Programme and the project Youth Revitalising Democracy; the partnership with the European Commission in the youth field; and the Quality Label for Youth Centres. In light of the Parliamentary Assembly's recommendation, the Committee of Ministers also takes note of the call from its youth statutory bodies to strengthen the resources of the European Youth Foundation and the European Youth Centres to better support youth-led democratic initiatives, particularly where civic space is under threat.

8. Finally, the Committee of Ministers highlights that co-operation with other international organisations, including the European Union, the OSCE, and the United Nations, to safeguard youth civic space and human rights is among the objectives of the youth sector. In particular, the sector will continue to strengthen its collaboration through the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership new work programme (2026-2028) and explore further joint initiatives.