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Strengthening democracies with young people: from participation to shared responsibility

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2302 (2026)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2302 \(2026\)](#) “Strengthening democracies with young people: from participation to shared responsibility” and forwarded it to the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ), for possible comments.
2. The Committee of Ministers shared the Parliamentary Assembly's view on the importance of promoting young people's participation in political life, as demonstrated by the Declaration of the 10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Valletta, 2025). The Committee of Ministers considered that the adoption of its own Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2026\)3](#) on the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, which mirrors the Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life adopted by the Congress, underscored its steady support for the participation of youth in national, regional, and local decision-making structures.
3. The Committee of Ministers also acknowledged the efforts made by the Youth Sector of the Organisation to implement the Reference Framework on a Youth Perspective through an action plan currently under preparation. This initiative will reinforce the ongoing work to strengthen youth participation across the Organisation, enhancing co-operation among the Council of Europe's various bodies, such as the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), the European Steering Committee on Youth (CDEJ), as well as the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and other entities, as also set out in the deliverables for the biennium 2026-2027.
4. The Committee of Ministers welcomed the fact that the Youth Sector continues to provide support to member States in implementing Council of Europe standards on youth participation, including through legislation, regulation, and youth work practice. It also recognised the role played by the European Youth Foundation (EYF) and the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, which offer unique international and European inclusive spaces for young people to develop their competences for democratic culture and contribute to the strengthening of democratic values. The ongoing reform and modernisation of the EYF, as well as the decision by the Committee of Ministers to launch the preparation of a feasibility study on the creation of a third venue of the European Youth Centre in the Black Sea region, further demonstrate the importance that member States attach to the youth policy of the Organisation.
5. The Committee of Ministers recalled that the Youth Sector Strategy 2030 remains the framework guiding efforts focused on participation, rights, inclusivity and youth work quality. Support for the intergovernmental programme of the Quality Label for Youth Centres helps maintain and upgrade quality assurance across youth centres. Initiatives such as the “equal access fund” at the European Youth Foundation (EYF) will strengthen the accessibility and inclusiveness of youth programmes. Following the 10th Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, the Committee of Ministers also supported the launch of a study on the need for, and feasibility of, a new instrument in the youth field to consolidate and update the

1. Adopted at the 1566th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (8 July 2026).



Council of Europe's *acquis*. Finally, by deciding to launch a comparative study examining the experience of countries that have lowered the voting age to 16, the Committee of Ministers aimed to consider new measures that will increase young people's trust in democratic institutions and reinforce democratic legitimacy.

6. Finally, the Committee of Ministers recalled that international co-operation with the European Union is well established through the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership, which has been extended to 2028.