

4th Eastern Partnership Youth Conference - Youth for Revitalisation of Democracy

11 – 12 July 2022

Prague, Czech Republic

Agenda

10 July 2022

Entire day Arrivals and registration of participants at the hotel

11 July 2022 - Day 1 - inspire and motivate

08:00 - 08:45 Transport to the Parliament of the Czech Republic

08:45 - 09:15 Registration of participants

09:15 - 10:00 Opening ceremony

Opening speeches will highlight the importance of the conference for youth in the EaP region as well as the major role that youth can and should play in building democratic and resilient societies, and will briefly introduce the context, goals, agenda and expected outcomes of the event.

Speakers: **Marketa Pekarova Adamova**, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic

Martin Dvorak, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czech Republic

Michael Siebert, Managing Director for Russia, Eastern partnership, Central Asia, Regional cooperation and OSCE, European External Action Service

10:00 - 10:15 Overview of the day

10:15 - 12:00 First Panel - Shrinking Civic Spaces: recommendations for ensuring a safe and enabling environment for youth participation

The civil society in the EaP region continues to face challenges that threaten its existence and fundamental principles. According to international reports from Amnesty International, CIVICUS, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, there is increasingly limited democratic space and influence for civil society, with restrictions in terms of legal and regulatory frameworks, and violence against human rights activists calling for transparency, freedom, equality, and justice. CIVICUS' 2019 report- People Power Under Attack - stated that youth were one of the five groups most commonly exposed to assaults on fundamental freedoms in civic space; the conclusions of the 2019 report were found to be consistent also in 2020. Of particular concern, in the EaP region, are Belarus - where the regime's liquidation campaign against civil society organisations and activists fully excluded young people from any decision-making processes, confronted them with unprecedented pressure, and led to more than 400 political prisoners among youth activists - and Azerbaijan where authorities are mired in systemic corruption, political opposition is persecuted, and civil society is infringed. Even in the associated countries and Armenia, the civic space has considerably shrunk following democratic backsliding triggered by cumbersome reform implementation in the sectors of judicial independence, anti-corruption and the rule of law.

Against this backdrop, the panel will discuss the implications of shrinking civic space for youth activists and human rights defenders, the main barriers and threats to young people's participation (e.g. political, legal, financial, etc.) and possible ways to overcome them, the main vulnerable groups within youth groups, and, most importantly, will present recommendations for ensuring safer and more enabling civic spaces for youth addressing a wide range of stakeholders (youth, international and regional organizations, donors, social media and tech companies, etc.)

Speakers: **Valeriu Dragalin**, President, European Democracy Youth Network, Slovakia

Alexandra Kirby, Senior Programme Manager, European Endowment for Democracy

Peter Varga, Senior Regional Coordinator Europe, Open Government Partnership

Marharyta Vorykhava, Chairperson, Belarusian National Youth Council RADA

Alyona Romanyuk, Founder of the fact-checking project
"NotaEnota"

12:00 - 13:15 **Lunch**

13:15 - 14:00 **Transport back to conference hall**

14:00 - 15:30 **Second Panel - Youth as a driving force for change in times of crises**

This panel will address several aspects related to youth leadership in times of crises: actions during the COVID-19 pandemic, resilience-building, peacebuilding.

The potential of youth to contribute to peace processes was recognised by the United Nations Security Council in 2015 through the adoption of Resolution 2250, which included a commitment to ensuring the participation of young people in conflict prevention and resolution, violence prevention, and the promotion of social cohesion. Resolution 2535, adopted in 2020, reiterated the role of youth in preventing and resolving conflict, as well as in building and maintaining peace, encouraging Member States to include young people in decision-making processes across these areas. Despite these steps, the important role that young people can play in peace processes is often under-acknowledged. Therefore, the panel aims to raise awareness about the major contribution that youth can have to peace processes by discussing their potential roles in achieving sustainable peace, main challenges to their inclusion in peacebuilding and ways to overcome them, effective tools for ensuring meaningful youth participation in all the stages of the peacebuilding programming, and concrete steps for youth-inclusive peace processes, and how to cultivate a culture of tolerance.

Speakers: **Petra Gombalova Kyslingerova**, Head of Division, Regional Eastern Partnership, Regional Cooperation, and OSCE, EEAS

Denys Ganzha, Founder of Public Diplomacy Platform, EDYN Ukraine Ambassador, Member of the Youth Affairs Council under the President of Ukraine

Christiana Xenofontos, Board member, European Youth Forum

Aleksander Lapko, Executive Director, Belarusian Youth Hub

Mariana Turcan, Advisor on Youth to the Prime Minister of Republic of Moldova

15:30 - 15:45 **Coffee break**

15:45 - 18:00 **Field trips / fair**

Field trips to local organisations in Prague will be a welcome change to the conference dynamics, and also an opportunity to tap into the host city's pool of projects addressing youth for democracy and resilience. Participants have the chance to discover best practices, to visit project sites, to interact with project implementers, and even to identify potential partners for their projects in the field.

18:00 - 18:30 **Free time**

18:00 - 20:00 **Networking dinner**

12 July 2022 - Day 2 - train and empower

09:00 - 09:05 **Opening and overview of the day**

09:05 - 10:30 **Creative ways to reach, educate and foster the participation of EaP youth in building democratic and resilient societies - best practices and youth stories**

Parallel best practice sessions are held based on the projects selected through an open call for participation to EaP CSF members, EaP/EU organisations in general, as well as based on review of specialised publications, databases and recommendations of European organisations and institutions active in the field of youth (e.g., Eastern European Network for Citizenship Education, European Youth Forum, EU-CoE Youth Partnership Office, etc.)

Best practices involve partners from different fields (civil society organisations, educational institutions, public authorities, mass media, etc.) in order to ensure a balanced perspective and a collaborative approach to educating youth for democracy and resilience-building.

Project presentations are grouped under four clusters in accordance with the main thematic pillars of the conference:

I. Youth Take the Floor: Innovative Tools for Engaging Young People in Decision-Making

The session will allow participants to become familiar with tools that have been successfully used through projects across Europe for actively and meaningfully involving youth in decision-making at local, national, regional levels. A special emphasis will be put

on projects that have managed to reach out to and effectively engage youth with fewer opportunities.

II. Youth Leaders for Community Development

The session will introduce participants to best practices showcasing youth-led solutions for more democratic and resilient communities. A special emphasis will be put on projects promoting education for democratic citizenship and human rights as a means for thriving democracies and on projects promoting a gender-sensitive approach to leadership.

III. Youth and Peacebuilding: Key Insights and Lessons from Youth Engaged in Peace Processes

The session will bring to the forefront projects that have successfully raised awareness about the major role that youth can play in peace processes, and that have taken concrete steps for their inclusion in peacebuilding.

IV. Youth Online: Building Media Literacy among youth - digital tools for democracy

The session will showcase initiatives that have helped youth to improve their media literacy.

10:30 - 10:45 **Coffee break**

10:45 - 12:15 **Parallel capacity building workshops**

I. Unlocking Potential in Youth-Inclusive Peacebuilding

The workshop enables participants to better understand the needs, challenges and potential of young people in peacebuilding, as well as to explore possible entry points for their active involvement in peace processes. The session will enhance participants' basic skills that are essential for their successful contribution to peacebuilding, and will also provide them with ideas for youth empowerment strategies.

II. Learn to Discern: Tips and Strategies for Spotting and Countering Fake News and Disinformation

The workshop will enhance the capacity of youth organizations in their support for young people to interpret, analyse, and combat fake news, and will provide participants with a practical toolkit that they can use in their activities.

III. The Power of Youth Leadership in Advancing Young People's Access to Rights

Youth have the passion, energy and creativity to challenge entrenched patterns of exclusion and injustice and are uniquely placed to bring positive change in society. The workshop will introduce participants to concrete strategies and tools that youth leaders can use for successfully advocating for the participation of young people at the highest levels of decision-making.

IV. Funding available to EaP Youth for Designing and Implementing Projects on Democracy and Resilience

The workshop will discuss the main donors and funding programs available for designing and implementing youth projects in the EaP region, aimed at building democratic and resilient societies, as well tips for improving the quality of project applications.

12:15 - 13:30 Lunch

13:30 - 15:00 World Café “What works in educating youth in the EaP region for active engagement in building resilient societies?”

For this session, the World Café method will be used. Several major questions are asked, and a corresponding number of groups of participants are set up and seated at café-style tables. Participants put down their ideas on tablecloths or placemats in the center of the table. One person remains at the table as a “table host” to welcome a new set of participants whereas the others travel to other tables, carrying key ideas, themes and questions into their new conversations. At the end, table hosts present their reports from the World-Café Groups.

The ultimate goal of the session is to draft a recommendation paper for Creative Education and Engagement of EaP Youth in Building Resilient Communities. The recommendation paper aims to address decision makers on local and national levels in the EaP to improve mechanisms of youth engagement, and will be shared with all EaP CSF members and stakeholders following the event.

15:00 - 15:15 Coffee break

15:15 - 16:45 Revitalisation of Democracy Lab - Developing a joint statement with recommendations from the Youth Conference

The session will invite participants to work together for elaborating a Statement of the Youth Conference on the situation of democracy and human rights in the EaP region, and will build on the conclusions of the 5th Eastern Partnership Youth Forum organised under the auspices of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU in November 2021. The

statement will include commitments and recommended actions for surmounting authoritarianism, radicalisation, nationalism and xenophobia, populism, and other anti-democratic tendencies in the EaP region, and will specify what participants demand of EU and EaP countries' governments to do in this regard. The Statement will also give participants the opportunity to take a stand on the war in Ukraine.

16:45 - 17:15 Closing ceremony and concluding remarks

The EaP CSF representative will make an overview especially highlighting the outputs of the event e.g., the Statement of the Conference, the draft Resource Kit, and the steps to follow e.g., how and when the Kit will be finalised and made available, how the Statement will be made public. The moderator from each workshop could provide a snapshot of the session he/she facilitated and maybe a glimpse into participants' feedback about the respective sessions. The EaP CSF representative will remind the audience about the photo/essay competition, the prize at stake and the deadline for submissions.

Creative ways to engage the whole audience during the concluding session

Getting participants' quick reaction to different sessions during the two days (very short interviews or Slido asking, for example, about the most important thing they learned or what they are going to do differently when getting back home) and projecting those videos like a mini-film during the "Concluding remarks" session.

Playing a quick game of conference trivia. Participants are invited to answer questions related to what went on during the three days (which means they have to pay close attention during the whole event). The winners are offered small, easy-to-carry prizes (e.g., souvenir from Prague, tote bag, stationery customized with the title of the conference, hat, etc.). Usually, it is a fun session that engages everyone in the room.

18:00 - 19:30 Free time

19:30 - 21:00 Farewell Dinner

13 July 2022 - Departure of participants