



European Committee
of the Regions

Young Elected Politicians Programme

Media Press Kit 2026

Young local leaders shaping Europe's regions and cities



YEP at a Glance

The Young Elected Politicians Programme (YEPs) is a network of politicians who are no older than 35 and hold a political mandate at regional or local level in the European Union.

Launched by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) during the 8th European Summit of Regions and Cities in Bucharest in 2019, the programme is aiming to provide young local and regional elected politicians a first-hand look into the EU.

The programme has expanded significantly in terms of both size and scope. Now

encompassing a dynamic network of **almost 1,000 young local leaders from both the EU and all candidate countries**, the YEP programme welcomes 150 new members each year and most of our YEPs are coming from Italy (15%), Germany (8%) and Spain (7%).



In line with the CoR's May 2023 [action plan on gender equality](#), the YEP network has an overall gender balance of 55% male and 45% female members.

Expansion of the network to enlargement countries

In 2023, for the first time since its inception, the programme was opened to EU candidate countries, allowing young elected leaders from Ukraine, Moldova, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey to participate in the work of the Union.

In 2024, young local leaders from Georgia could also apply to join the YEP community.

What is the purpose

The purpose of the network is to:

- Exchange best practice among local and regional politicians;
- Network with CoR members, Political Groups and fellow young politicians from the EU and the EU Candidate Countries in person and online;
- Understand and seize opportunities offered by the EU for local and regional areas;
- Speak for EU regions and municipalities in the European legislative process;
- Gain visibility in European circles;
- Strengthen the outreach of young representatives through communication support and tailored trainings.

What We Offer

One of the aims of the YEP programme is to integrate YEPs into EU policy-making by connecting them with CoR Members and rapporteurs. This happens through a variety of channels:

- Members participating as **speakers to dedicated YEP sessions**;
- YEPs participating in **consultations with rapporteurs on key CoR opinions across policies**;
- YEPs being invited as **speakers and participants** to CoR Plenary Sessions and meetings of [CoR commissions](#) and [EU Local Dialogues](#);
- Political groups and national delegations can invite YEPs to their meetings;
- Communication actions, featuring CoR members and YEPs.

YEP Cohort Highlights 2025/26

Consultations

➤ Consultation with CoR rapporteur on European Democracy Shield

On 25 March 2026, 35 YEPs from 14 EU Member States and Ukraine, participated in a consultation on the [CoR opinion on the European Democracy Shield \(EUDS\)](#) with rapporteur [Stephen De Ron](#) (LU/Greens+PRO). The consultation took place in the framework of the Winter School 2026, a three-day capacity-building programme focused on citizen engagement and local democracy.

Read more: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/young-local-leaders-call-stronger-democratic-protections-cor-consultation-european-democracy-shield>

➤ Consultation with CoR rapporteur on Intergenerational Fairness opinion

On 11 March 2025, seven YEPs from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy and Turkey took part in a consultation with CoR rapporteur [Tine Radinja](#) (SL/Greens), Mayor of the Municipality of Škofja Loka, in the framework of the preparation of the CoR [opinion](#) on '*Intergenerational Fairness: A Local and Regional Approach to Building Inclusive and Sustainable Societies*'. The YEPs contributed in the draft opinion with experiences from their regions and shared proposals and best practices.

Read more: <https://dm-api.cor.europa.eu/v1/documents/VAQWXHKVTXAD-1275017477-1288/download>

Youth Dialogues

➤ YEPs in SEDEC Youth Dialogue with Commissioner Micallef

On 2 February 2026, three YEPs from Belgium, Germany and Greece had the opportunity to participate in the Youth dialogue with **Glenn Micallef, European Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport**, at the SEDEC commission meeting.

The discussion focused on enhancing measures to combat [cyberbullying](#) with our YEP Ms Korovesi, Regional Councillor of Athens, Greece stressing that digital spaces allow anonymity without responsibility. The new [Culture Compass](#) initiative, the youth dimension of Erasmus+, and the cultural aspects of the AgoraEU proposal for 2028-34 were also thoroughly discussed.

Read more: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/local-and-regional-leaders-call-stronger-eu-action-youth-participation-and-protection>

➤ **YEPs in Youth Policy Dialogue with Commissioner Mînzatu**

On 6 March 2025, five YEPs from Austria, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain gathered in Brussels for the [European Commission's Youth Policy Dialogue](#) with **Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu (EVP)**, in the margins of DG EMPL's annual flagship event on social policy, the [European Employment and Social Rights Forum](#). The dialogue provided a vibrant forum for young leaders to discuss pressing issues around youth employment, skills development, and the future of the labour market, especially in relation to artificial intelligence (AI).

Read more: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/young-elected-politicians-european-commissions-youth-dialogues>

➤ **ALDA's Youth Impact Forum 2025**

In September 2025, three YEPs from Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Czech Republic participated in the Youth Impact Forum under the theme '*Empowered Youth, Vibrant Democracies*', organised by the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA). Young people, civil society organisations, public authorities, and institutional stakeholders shared experiences and practices that strengthen youth participation in democratic life.

YEPs also expressed their views about the importance of EU youth dialogues here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DOv3PIqjG81/>

Events

➤ **23rd European Week of Regions and Cities**

Every year, the members of the YEP programme have the opportunity to attend all CoR flagship events. In this case, the #EURegionsWeek, the four-day event during which cities and regions showcase their capacity to create growth and jobs, implement EU cohesion policy, and prove the importance of the local and regional level for good European governance.

This year, 104 YEPs from 28 countries were among the over 5500 onsite participants who had the chance to attend 143 sessions, with 451 speakers from all over Europe and beyond. Our YEPs followed a tailored agenda with additional networking activities, including an interactive workshop on designing sustainable and inclusive future cities, inspired by [the CoR's 2025–2030 priorities](#) and the [JRC's Polycrisis tool](#). During the Week, YEPs have been interviewed by journalists across Europe. This year, 140 accredited journalists attended the Week.

Read more: [European Week of Regions and Cities | European Committee of the Regions](#)

➤ **EuroPCom**

EuroPCom is a cornerstone event among the CoR's flagship gatherings. Each year, YEPs have the opportunity to attend Europe's largest annual meeting of public communication experts, co-organised by EU institutions. Our YEPs participated actively as speakers, sharing their insights on how to enhance trust, civic engagement and transparency at the local level.

Read more: [EuroPCom | European Committee of the Regions](#)

➤ **YEPs joined the call to revise EU Cohesion Policy reform**

On 15 October, YEPs participated in a gathering in Brussels alongside the [CoR President Kata Tüttő](#), and elected representatives from regions, cities, and municipalities across Europe, all members of the #CohesionAlliance. Together, they called on the European Parliament and Member States to revise the proposed reform of Cohesion Policy included in the European Commission's draft for the [EU long-term budget for 2028–2034](#).

Read more here: [Future of Cohesion Policy: Don't let regions and cities be silenced! | European Committee of the Regions](#)

➤ **Connecting Greek schools with Europe**

In May 2025, more than 100 students from four schools in Pieria region of Greece had the opportunity to experience Europe up close through the initiative 'New Voice: Youth in Europe'. Six YEPs from Greece, Romania, Portugal and Italy participated in this hands-on engagement with local students, aiming to bridge the gap between EU-level politics and young people in local communities.

Read more here: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/connecting-greek-schools-europe-6-yeps-100-students-pieria-region>

Highlight events from previous years

➤ **The 10th European Summit of Regions and Cities**

On 18 and 19 March 2024, the city of Mons welcomed the 10th European Summit of Regions and Cities as part of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. 80 YEPs among thousands of mayors, councilors, regional ministers and high-level European and global decision makers gathered to exchange best practices, create new networks, and debate concrete and innovative local solutions to the global challenges faced by people and territories.

Read more here: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/plenaries-events/flagship-events/european-summits-regions-and-cities>

➤ **Debate on the EU Elections during the 159th CoR Plenary Session**

Together with the presidents of the youth wings of the European political parties, and CoR members, YEPs took the floor during the [debate on the European Election](#) in February 2024, and discussed how to engage young Europeans on the ground while closing the gap between generations, and addressing their concerns.

Read more: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/eu-elections-regions-and-cities-mobilise-engage-young-europeans-ground>

➤ **European Youth Event (EYE) in Forli and Strasbourg**

On 18 May 2024, five YEPs of the 2023 cohort, delved into the vibrant world of political engagement with a focus on youth at the [local European Youth Event](#) which took place in Forlí, Italy. CoR was also the session manager for a YEP panel discussion titled 'Discover European politics: work on the local and regional level' at the European Youth Event 2023 in Strasbourg.

More info: [European Youth Event](#) | [European Youth Event](#) | [European Parliament](#)

➤ **Young politicians responding to information manipulation**

On 8th March 2023, YEPs met in Brussels and online to participate in a discussion about how they can respond to information manipulation and speak about it with citizens. Institutional and civil society experts from Eurostat, DROG Group, Lie Detectors were among the speakers.

Read more: [Disinformation at the local level - Young politicians responding to information manipulation](#) | [European Committee of the Regions](#)

➤ **Consultation with CoR rapporteur on stopping gender-based violence**

On 28 June 2023, 12 YEPs from Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania took part in a consultation with CoR rapporteur [Donatella Porzi](#) (IT/Renew), Regional Councillor of Umbria, in the framework of the preparation of the CoR [opinion](#) on 'Stopping gender-based violence - cities and regions leading the way'. The YEPs contributed in the draft opinion with experiences from their regions and shared proposals.

Media Appearance

Italian journalist Federica Zoja from the RAI network featured the YEP programme in her recent report 'Face to 'Face with the YEPs: The Future of the Union'. The story features interviews with local politicians and members of the YEP Programme from Belgium, France and Luxembourg, offering a glimpse into the perspectives of a new generation committed to building a stronger Union. *Watch the full report:* <https://www.rainews.it/tgr/vda/video/2025/10/face-a-face-avec-les-yep-le-futur-de-lunion-c6d84619-afc8-48e0-8902-b8d860825938.html>

Trainings

YEPs enjoy regular training, e.g. in communication, outreach, engagement and political priorities as well as capacity-building initiatives.

➤ **Capacity-building initiatives**

In 2023/24, through the **Capacity Building Programme: Becoming a citizen participation expert** as part of the '[A new chapter for EU democracy](#)' initiative, selected YEPs participated in online trainings and a three-day in-person Winter School in February 2024, aiming at enabling them to deliver effective participatory democracy projects within their cities and regions.

Following the success of 2024, the CoR is facilitating the training of Young Elected Politicians (YEP) on citizen engagement and outreach methods. Every year, 30-35 YEPs have the chance to engage with EU institutions and stakeholders in order to acquire important skills and knowledge for their role as locally and regionally elected representatives.

Read more: [From learning to leading: Empowering young leaders to transform citizen engagement – Insights from YEPs | European Committee of the Regions](#)

➤ **Social media Masterclass**

In 2024 and 2025, social media masterclasses tailored to the YEPs' communication needs were organised in the context of EU Regions Week. In 2024, experts in content creation from the European Commission and the European Parliament were invited to showcase best practices for social media storytelling and vertical video content.

In 2025, EU policy communication experts focused on political campaigning and messages, how to build trust with journalists, and social media accessibility.

Digital & Social Media

Due to their diverse backgrounds, our YEPs are engaged in different policy areas. Therefore, we encourage them to participate in CoR campaigns alongside our CoR members, focusing on policy areas that align with the CoR's political priorities.

Social Media

In today's social media environment, engagement is increasingly driven by creators whose communities are built on familiarity and credibility rather than sheer scale. Mid-size accounts often generate stronger interaction and more meaningful conversations than larger profiles with looser audience ties.

In this context, YEPs act as powerful amplifiers of CoR's messages across social media. As true digital natives, they reach audiences far beyond traditional channels, engaging directly with citizens and sharing EU values alongside the everyday experience of local and regional authorities. With a combined Instagram following base of more than 300,000 followers, YEPs place themselves at the crossroads between influencers and content creators. Social media communication related to the YEPs uses the hashtag [#YoungLocalLeaders](#).

YEPs work closely with the CoR to co-create content. Using a narrative-driven approach and the native language and trends of each platform, their social media activity highlights EU priorities, anniversaries and stories emerging from local communities.

EU Priorities and Anniversaries

- [Cyprus takes over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#)
- [The European Democracy Shield](#)
- [Climate & Water resilience](#)
- [Things in my city that just make sense](#)
- [Commemorating the anniversary of the war in Ukraine](#)

The Mobile Journalism Project

To support this work, a structured social media collaboration is offered through the Mobile Journalism (MoJo) project. This internal initiative rests on two pillars: a training component - delivered via a dedicated social media masterclass - and a content creation project, in which the YEPs present EU-related projects from their own communities through reels and carousel posts. The programme enters its second edition in 2026.

MoJo Stories

- [Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Arts](#)
- [Social and sport integration in Cesinali, Italy](#)
- [The restauration of Cascina Pariani](#)
- [Saving the Hortobágyi pasture lake](#)

Video Production

'[For more women in politics](#)' Initiative, our YEPs participated in a series of videos with CoR members on topics related to gender equality.

- Video on [gender bias in AI](#)
- Video on [gender gap in health](#)
- Video on [gender equality and intersectionality](#)

For the European Elections 2024:

- 17 YEPs shared [their views about the future of Europe](#) in the light of the Elections for the European Parliament which took place on 6-9 June 2024.

YEP Monthly Newsletter

In 2023, the YEP team launched the YEP Monthly Newsletter, which includes information about future events, activities and trainings organised by CoR as well as monthly highlights of high-level meetings, including events where members of the YEP programme have participated as speakers, facilitators and contributors.

Please contact the CoR YEP Team at yep-programme@cor.europa.eu if you wish to subscribe to the Newsletter and receive more information on our YEPs and activities.

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