



What is the YEP programme?

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

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.

YEP programme 2024

The call for application to join the YEP Programme in 2024 is now open. Candidates can apply [by filling in this form until 19th of April.](#)

The activities of the YEP Programme 2024 will start in May.

To become part of this network, politicians must:

- apply for the [annual call for the YEP programme](#) that is published each year;
- have been elected by direct universal suffrage at regional or local level in a Member State of the European Union or an [EU Candidate Country](#);
- be no older than 35 (born after 1 January 1989);
- do not hold a mandate as a CoR member or alternate;
- have a good level of English

One of the aims of the YEP programme is to put in contact CoR members and YEPs. This happens through a variety of channels:

- members participating as speakers to YEP sessions;
- consultations with CoR rapporteurs on key opinions;
- 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.

Brief history

The YEP programme was launched by the CoR during the 8th European Summit of Regions and Cities in Bucharest in 2019, 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 network of over 800 young local leaders from both the EU and candidate countries, the YEP programme has become a fundamental component of the CoR.

In 2023, for the first time since its inception, the programme was open to EU candidate countries, allowing young elected politicians from Ukraine, Moldova, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Türkiye to engage in the Union's functioning.

In accordance to the CoR's May 2023 Gender Equality Action Plan, the 2023 YEP cohort was gender balanced (50-50), integrating to the YEP network 156 new YEPs.

The 2023 YEP cohort activities

Events

- [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. Thousands of mayors, councillors, 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. 80 members of the YEP programme attended the Mons Summit.

- [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.

- [A new chapter for participatory democracy: Paving the way for the future](#)

Strengthening the [democratic foundation](#) of the European Union has always been at the very core of the European Committee of Regions. This conference, which took place in December 2023, aimed to highlight a path towards the future of citizen participation.

- [The 21st European Week of Regions and Cities](#)

In October 2023, the EURegionsWeek2023 brought together over 8,000 participants from local and regional administrations, local authorities, young politicians, academics, NGOs and private sector. 93 YEPs from in total 24 countries, including non-EU/candidate countries, actively participated in workshops and events with many assuming pivotal roles as speakers and facilitators. The session on ["Innovative practices in participatory politics"](#) was a dedicated session for participants of the YEP programme.

- [Local and regional strategies for closing the gender gap in politics: Roads taken and what's next?](#)

As part of the "[For more women in politics](#)" initiative of the CoR, the overarching theme of the conference, as part of the European Parliament Gender Equality Week in October, tackled the "what's next?" when it comes to gender equality by looking at what has been achieved while also discussing what more needs to be done to achieve gender equality.

- [EuroPCom: Communicating Democracy – Communicating Europe](#)

Given their experience running a successful election campaign, six YEPs were invited to facilitate round table discussions in [Ideas Lab 3 Audience segmentation as a communication strategy](#) and report back about the findings of their table to all participants.

- CoR-YEP session at the [European Youth Event 2023](#)

On 9th June the CoR was session manager for a panel discussion titled 'Discover European politics: work on the local and regional level'. It focused on how the CoR is working to encourage and endorse youth participation in elections and the policy making process through initiatives such as the Youth Charter on Democracy, fostering a youth-friendly democratic space to ensure that voices of young people are formally represented in the EU.

- [From local to global: fostering women's leadership in a changing world](#)

On 14th March, YEPs participated in the CoR event for International Women's Day 2023 in Brussels.

- [A new chapter for participatory democracy: Moving towards a more resilient, inclusive and citizen-centred democracy](#)

Building on the success of the 2021 project From local to European and leading up to the 2024 European elections, the CoR renewed its partnership with the Bertelsmann Stiftung. The new collaboration was launched by a kick-off conference that took place on 9 March 2023 and our YEPs were in the spotlight.

- [Disinformation at the local level - Young politicians responding to information manipulation](#)

On 8th March, 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.

Trainings

YEPs enjoy regular trainings, 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.

- **CoR Digital Masterclasses**

The [Digital Masterclasses](#) intend to keep the attendees up to date with the ever-changing digital media landscape. In 2023, CoR's social media team offered several high-level talks and workshops. Personalised coaching sessions are offered exclusively to YEPs, CoR members, alternate members, and members of the European Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors.

Social media

Online communication related to the YEP programme uses the hashtag #YoungLocalLeaders.

- **21st European Week of Regions and Cities:** Reel on cohesion policy [on Instagram](#), featuring 8 YEPs.
- **For more women in politics:** Reel on gender equality [on Instagram](#), featuring 6 YEPs.
- **"YEP Green Stories":** This initiative was launched in 2023. YEPs shared [on Instagram](#) best [#EUGreenDeal](#) practices in their local communities, supporting global climate goals ahead of the [COP28](#) in Dubai in December 2023 and on Green Skills for the International Youth Day.
- **"YEP, this is my city!":** The initiative started in April 2021 and features YEPs, presenting their cities and regions. An example from Kateryna Musiienko, YEP of the 2023 cohort from Ukraine on [our social media channels](#).
- [Instagram stories with YEPs](#)
- [YEP Facebook platform](#): More than 450 YEPs and Alumni are members and share their news, answer to polls and receive information for future events and activities.

Videos

- **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 will take place 6-9 June 2024.
- **For more women in politics:**
 - Video [featuring CoR member Sari Rautio and YEP Tiffany Fevery on Gender equality and intersectionality](#).
 - Video [featuring CoR member Antje Grotheer and YEP Ilaria Capano on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#).

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.

- [March 2024](#)
- [February 2024](#)
- [January 2024](#)
- [December 2023](#)
- [November 2023](#)
- [September 2023](#)