



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.

What we offer

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 dedicated YEP sessions**;
- YEPs participating in **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 almost 1,000 young local leaders from both the EU and all 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 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.

In line with the CoR's May 2023 action plan on gender equality, the YEP network has an overall gender balance of 56% male and 44% female members. We welcome 150 new members each year.

Previous YEP cohort activities

Events

- [The 22nd 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. Our YEPs tailored agenda with additional networking activities. This year, **113 YEPs** were among the over 7000 onsite participants who had the chance to attend 156 sessions, with over 500 speakers from all over Europe and beyond, an exhibition with 30 stands and 9 regional tastings.

- [The 15th EuroPCom: Engage Europe](#)

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-organized by EU institutions. While the last edition was held online, our YEPs actively participated as speakers, sharing their insights on how AI is enhancing civic engagement and transparency at the local level. Read more [here](#).

- [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 Forlì, 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.

- [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.

- [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.

Following the success of 2024, the CoR is facilitating the training of Young Elected Politicians (YEP) on citizen engagement and outreach methods. Throughout the [three-day course](#), 25 YEPs will have a 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.

▪ 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.

Videos

For the "[More women in politics](#)" initiative:

- Video featuring [CoR member Sergio Pérez Garcia and YEP Dialekti Athina Voutyrakou on gender bias in AI](#).
- Video featuring [CoR member Daniela Cimpean and YEP Mathilde Hjord Bressum on gender gap in health](#).
- 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](#).



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 6-9 June 2024.

Social media

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

- **Instagram Live Sessions with YEPs**

- ahead of the [#EURegionsWeek 2024](#) &
- on [how the war is shaping the lives of young Ukrainians](#).

- **#EURegionsWeek 2023**

Reel on cohesion policy [on Instagram](#), featuring 8 YEPs.

- **For "[More women in politics](#)" initiative**

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](#).

- **[YEP Facebook platform:](#)**

More than 500 YEPs and Alumni are members and share their news, answer to polls and receive information for future events and activities.

- **[Instagram stories with YEPs](#)**

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.

