

Conference on how youth work can support youth participation in remote territories of Europe

The European EGL Event of 2026, with the ambition to contribute to ongoing European discussions and to facilitate peer learning, focuses on the role of youth work in supporting youth participation in local communities facing geographical obstacles. These communities may be located in remote or rural areas, small islands, peripheral regions, or less-serviced municipalities, where tailored strategies are needed to support youth engagement in community life. The event aims to reflect on the specific approaches municipal-level youth work requires in these parts of Europe, as well as on models for engaging young people in the life of their communities.

The background

This event is the 8th European network conference of the strategic cooperation Europe Goes Local. This year marks a special edition, as it is the first time the conference is co-organized with and co-hosted by a European Youth Capital. In 2026, Tromsø hosts the EGL Event, inspiring the conference theme through the goals of its European Youth Capital programme, True North 2026.

The year 2026 is also a crucial moment for European youth work and youth policy development. Negotiations on the future Erasmus+ funding scheme are ongoing within the European Union's decision-making institutions, triggering advocacy and lobbying efforts in the community of practice to secure continued European funding for youth work development and youth mobility.

Another key political framework, the European Youth Strategy, is also set to be re-discussed and renewed for the 2028–2034 period, providing the backbone and reference framework for youth policy in Europe.

The European Youth Work Agenda remains the core policy framework for European youth work, and its connected Roadmap is yet to be launched as the main outcome of the sector's landmark event, the 4th European Youth Work Convention, which took place in 2025 in Malta.

At the municipal level, youth work received important reinforcement in 2025 from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. The European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, adopted in October 2025, highlights the vital role of youth work in local communities as one of the key support structures enabling young people to achieve meaningful participation.

Intentions

- Discuss what meaningful local youth participation entails in remote, less privileged or rural areas by exploring (legal) frameworks, (alternative) formats, platforms, tools, and channels, as well as the supporting role of youth work.
- Exchange views and present existing models for overcoming obstacles to engaging young people in shaping local communities and ensuring their voices are heard.
- Showcase how Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps can support meaningful youth participation in local communities, and the role youth work plays in this ecosystem.
- Gather input for the European consultation on the European Youth Strategy 2028–2034.
- Last but not least, as the Europe Goes Local project marks its 10th anniversary in 2026, celebrate the community of practice that has developed steadily throughout this decade-long journey 😊.

Profile of participants

The event will bring together about 120 participants with the following profiles:

- Municipality-representatives from remote and less privileged areas of Europe (including its overseas territories): elected politicians responsible for youth policy; municipal staff working on youth (work) affairs at the municipality
- Young people active in the local community, members of local youth councils, youth NGOs and those who take active part in local advocacy and community building outside formalized participation structures
- The national coordinators of Europe Goes Local within National Agencies and regional SALTO Centres.
- Representatives of local youth work organizations that actively collaborate with municipalities and are situated in remote or less privileged communities.
- Youth work experts who actively collaborate with municipalities in creating youth work policy and strategy, especially focusing on the engagement of young people in community life.
- Representatives of European institutions and NGOs actively supporting youth work and youth policy development in remote and less privileged areas of Europe