



Youth, Elections and Democratic Engagement: A Regional Dialogue

Cluj-Napoca, 25 - 26 February 2026

Casa Universitarilor, Auditorium Maximum Hall / Mihail Kogălniceanu 5

Day 1

12:00 - 13:00	Lunch at <i>Casa Universitarilor - Piramida</i> Restaurant
13:00 - 13:30	Registration & Welcome Coffee
13:30 - 13:50	Opening Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Daniel David, Rector, Babes-Bolyai University (UBB) (TBC)● Raul Mureșan, ODIHR Project Co-ordinator
13:50 - 14:30	Keynote Address: Youth, Trust and Democratic Participation Vlad Adamescu & Răzvan Petri, <i>Politica la minut</i> , Romania
14:30 - 15:45	Session 1: (Why) Do Young People Stay Away from Elections? Objective: Identify structural, political and institutional factors contributing to youth disengagement from electoral processes across the Western Balkans, beyond awareness and information gaps
	Moderator: Nataliya Vasylevska, Associate Project Officer, ODIHR
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mia Radovanović, Senior Project Officer, Council of Europe Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina Office (TBC)● Matei Vrabie, Program Manager, Funky Citizens, Romania● Blendë Pira, Legal Researcher & Program Coordinator, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Kosovo*● Davor Džakula, OSCE Pool of Young Experts, Serbia
15:45 - 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 - 17:15	Session 2: Education and Political Socialization of Youth – Limits and Opportunities Objective: Assess the role of formal education, civic education and universities in shaping democratic literacy and electoral engagement, including beyond social science disciplines
	Moderator: Bogdan Radu, Lecturer in Political Science, UBB
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Giorgiana Spătacean, Secretary General, National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania● Milica Borjanić, Secretary General, National Youth Council of Serbia● Gabriel Bădescu, Professor of Political Science, UBB
17:15 - 18:15	Session 3: Inclusion or Tokenism? Reaching Underrepresented and Marginalized Youth Objective: Explore shared barriers to participation faced by non-student youth, rural youth, NEET groups, young women, Roma youth, national minorities and

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	youth with disabilities, and assess whether existing participation mechanisms enable meaningful inclusion
	Moderator: Maria Olariu, Researcher in Political Science, UBB
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Quentin Rumeau, Associate Democratic Governance Officer, ODIHR● Afërdita Haxhijaha Imeri, Senior Program Manager and Social Inclusion Specialist, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), North Macedonia● Adelina Mureșan, Youth Advocate, Interact Transilvania, Romania● Fernando Varga, Researcher, UBB
18:15	Wrap-Up of Day 1

Day 2

09:00 - 09:30	Welcome Coffee
09:30 - 10:00	Keynote Address: Youth, Digital Participation and Democratic Risks Salome Margvelashvili, Regional Project Manager, Code for Romania
10:00 - 11:30	Session 4: Digital Natives, Democratic Risks – Youth, Social Media and Elections Objective: Examine how social networks, algorithms, influencers, micro-targeting and disinformation shape youth political behaviour and electoral participation Moderator: Quentin Rumeau, Associate Democratic Governance Officer, ODIHR
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bogdan Lungu, Project Coordinator, Association for Technology and Internet (ApTI), Romania● Zoran Richliev, Media Project Manager, Metamorphosis Foundation, North Macedonia● Roxana Pencea Brădățan, Campaign Coordinator, DECLIC, Romania● Dorin Spoaller, Lecturer in Strategic Communication, UBB
11:30 - 11:45	Coffee Break
12:45 - 13:15	Session 5: Are EMBs Reaching Young Voters? Institutional Communication and (Digital) Outreach Objective: Examine whether EMB voter information and communication strategies resonate with youth, and identify barriers related to institutional language, channels and formats Moderator: Shqipe Shaqiri-Islami, Senior Project Assistant, OSCE Mission in Kosovo
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Doina Bordeianu, Former Director of The Center for Continuing Education in the Electoral Field (CICDE), Moldova● Kristina Žugić, Executive Director, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Montenegro (TBC)● Septimius Pârvu, Coordinator of the Electoral Program, Expert Forum, Romania● Migen Qiraxhi, Elections Programme Manager, Qendresa Qytetare, Kosovo

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13:15 - 14:15	Lunch
14:15- 15:45	<p>Session 6: From Participation to Influence – Youth Engagement in Electoral Reform</p> <p>Objective: Discuss pathways for youth engagement beyond voter turnout, including election observation, advocacy and participation in electoral reform processes</p>
	Moderator: George Jiglau, Lecturer in Political Science, UBB
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● George Jiglau, Lecturer in Political Science, UBB ● Elisa Parnefält Størksen, President, European Dialogue and Democracy Association (EDDA), Norway ● Sorana Constantinescu, Lecturer in Political Science, UBB, TAKEPART Project ● Vildan Plepi, Program Director, National Democratic Institute (NDI), Albania
15:45	<p>Concluding Session / Key findings and way forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maria Olariu, UBB Rapporteur ● Raul Mureşan, ODIHR Project Co-ordinator

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