



## **OSCE/ODIHR Youth Forum**

**Warsaw**

**16-17 June 2014**

### **Call for Applications**

In many OSCE participating States, democratic institutions are facing major challenges. One particular challenge is the lack of trust and engagement of youth in democratic institutions. While traditional forms of political participation are decreasing amongst youth, alternative forms of political participation, such as online activism, are becoming increasingly appealing to them.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) will be organizing a two-day Youth Forum on 16-17 June 2014 in Warsaw. The Youth Forum will bring together youth leaders from South-East Europe as well as Central and Western Europe, Canada and the USA to discuss challenges to youth political participation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and ways to overcome these. The final outcome of the Youth Forum will be a number of recommendations on how the OSCE and its institutions can better assist participating States to meet their commitments and obligations on the inclusion of youth in democratic processes.

The Youth Forum will involve three categories of young leaders – representing the following categories;

- 1) *Voice*: This relates to informal forms of political participation and focuses on online activism. Ideal candidates include representatives of social media groups and bloggers.
- 2) *Influence*: This relates to semi-formal forms of political participation and focuses on civil society organizations active in advocating and lobbying for changes to policies. We are looking for leaders who want to influence politics but do not want to do so through formal structures.
- 3) *Governance*: This relates to formal mechanisms of political participation such as political parties and governance institutions. Ideal candidates are leaders such as young politicians and members of parliaments, government representatives, city councilors, policy and political advisors.

The Youth Forum will explore different forms of political participation and how these complement each other thus including youth in democratic policy work. Participants will be offered an opportunity to discuss good practices and challenges in youth political participation in the OSCE region. The Youth Forum will also offer a unique opportunity to explore and discuss the unique approach that the OSCE offers – its comprehensive cross-dimensional approach to security.

The participants will be asked to actively participate during the Youth Forum in various working groups. Moreover, selected participants will be asked to actively participate in moderated online discussions ahead of the Youth Forum. The OSCE/ODIHR reserves the right to withdraw the invitation should a selected participant fail to engage in online discussion, on a weekly basis, ahead of the seminar.



Please apply by submitting your online application no later than 16 May 2014 to the following email address: [youth@odihr.pl](mailto:youth@odihr.pl)

We are looking forward to welcoming you to Warsaw for interesting and productive days!

*Selection Procedures:*

**35 youth representatives will be invited from Central, Western and South Eastern Europe as well as Canada and the USA to the Youth Leadership Forum, to be held from 16 to 17 June 2014 in Warsaw. Participants will be selected by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions (ODIHR) based on the below listed selection criteria. Accommodation and travel costs for the event will be covered by the OSCE/ODIHR.**

**Selection criteria:**

- Young leaders aged 25 to 35;
- Gender and geographical balance;
- Minimum 2 years of experience and proven track record of involvement and engagement within their community (i.e. involvement in the NGO sector, student's unions, local and national political parties, online democracy and human rights associations, political parties and NGOs);
- Participants will have to submit the application form and their CV;
- All applicants may be asked to take part in a Skype interview;
- English language competency
  
- Availability to actively and regularly participate in online discussion leading up to the Youth Forum as well as participate at the actual Youth Forum.

The applicants should have a proven track record of engagement within his/her community, demonstrating leadership potential and a desire to take an active role in positively shaping the world around them. Selected individuals will have to prepare prior to the event through online interactions with the organizers and other selected participants. Preparatory work includes readings, feedback on specific documents and active participation to online forums, provided by ODIHR. These materials will be provided to participants at the latest one week after being selected. Only highly motivated individuals will be considered. The OSCE/ODIHR reserves the right to withdraw an invitation should a selected participant not engage in preparatory consultations online.