



## Connecting the Dots: strengthening youth engagement in political and public life

### Speaker biographies

#### Welcome speakers

**Katarzyna Gardapkhadze** has been the First Deputy Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) since 2016. Before that, she served as the Head of ODIHR's Human Rights Department. Katarzyna has 25 years of experience in public service, international non-profits and multilateral organizations in Europe, North America, South Caucasus and Central Asia. Before joining the OSCE, she was director of Save the Children based in Tbilisi, Georgia. Earlier, she contributed her expertise to various initiatives, from the Eurasia Foundation's South Caucasus media support programme and USAID-funded Georgia youth peace project, to community strengthening work with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. Educated in social sciences, Katarzyna is a leadership, strategic management and organizational development expert. A graduate of Stanford Leadership Academy for Development, and a certified trainer (Institute for Leadership & Management), Katarzyna is strongly committed to responsible leadership rooted in ethical values, centered around human potential and driven by sustainable social impact.

**Rui Gomes** leads the programme of intercultural education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. Rui has been active in human rights education since the launching of the Human Rights Education Youth Programme in 2000 with the specific purpose of including human rights education in the mainstream of youth policy and youth work. He has authored and co-authored various publications such as Compass – the manual for human rights education with young people and the Education Pack All Different – All Equal. The capacity to carry out human rights education according to stated objectives and approaches is essential for its credibility and impact; critical thinking and digital citizenship matters are of particular importance to address younger generations.

#### Keynote speaker

**Luis Alvarado Martinez** has held elected office as the President of the European Youth Forum, the biggest youth organizations-led movement in Europe and the world, representing the voices of 50 million young Europeans towards the European Union, the Council of Europe and the UN system. He has championed the advancement of young people's rights and agendas on international level where he led successful campaigns to increase the EU's multimillion-euro mobility program ERASMUS, and fought the legal battle of abolishing unpaid internships for young people in EU institutions among some. Originally from the Canary Islands in Spain, he is a graduate from the College of Europe in Bruges and the London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE) Executive Summer School. His work has been recognized with distinctions such as "Young European of the Year 2014 by the Schwarzkopf Stiftung, European Charlemagne Youth Award by the European Parliament & Public Service Innovation Award 2015 by the European Centre for Government Transformation among others. He has held other advisory roles for the

Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in their Advisory Council on Youth, the EU-Australia Leadership Forum, Civil Society Europe, European Civic Forum and former French President Giscard d'Estaing and his political incubator ReImagine Europa among others. Luis also helped set up the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities initiative in Europe & Middle East supporting cities to become more resilient to the challenges of the XXI century and led the EU Public Policy work of 100RC and the Foundation towards the European Union. He currently works as Senior Advisor in the Spanish National Parliament and is VP for Global Affairs at the ICL Foundation working to empower hispanic leaders globally. Luis continues to advise and consult international organizations, governments and start-ups around the world on innovation, digitalization, resilience and climate adaptation and participatory decision making.

## Panel speakers

An elected Vice-President of the European Youth Forum, the European umbrella organization of youth organizations representing millions of young people in Europe, **Ville Majamaa** started his volunteering path at the age of 11 in a local scout group in Helsinki, Finland. Today, he has close to a decade of experience in mainstreaming youth policies in the different European Union, Council of Europe and United Nations bodies. Holding a BA from King's College London, Ville has Master's degrees from University College London and Moscow Higher School of Economics.

**Andrea Ugrinoska**, originally from North Macedonia, is the current Chair of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe. She lives and works in London with the British Youth Council. She has two MA degrees, one in European Social Policy from the Free University Brussels in Belgium, and another one from the UNESCO chaired MA programme in Peace and Conflict, from the university of Innsbruck, Austria. She is passionate about participation, inclusion and conflict transformation.

**Rezo Charkviani** started his work in the field of youth, last year, when he was appointed as an advisor to Prime Minister of Georgia on youth affairs. He currently is a head of the newly established Youth Agency of Georgia, and is working on the development of a sustainable ecosystem of youth sector that is based on "leaving no one behind" principle and international practices. Rezo is successful Entrepreneur and Startupper. His experience counts numerous of developed projects and initiatives. He holds an academic degree in Branding and Marketing and has been an associate professor for more than 8 years.

**Rūta Miliūtė**: [https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p\\_r=35299&p\\_k=2&p\\_a=498&p\\_asm\\_id=79132](https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35299&p_k=2&p_a=498&p_asm_id=79132)

**Agnieszka Gajewska** is Partner at PwC and the Leader of Public Sector and Infrastructure practice in Central & Eastern Europe. Polish national specializing in infrastructure financing, focusing on transport and social infrastructure, with particular focus on Emerging Markets. She has over 20 years professional experience in project management in project finance / PPP, corporate finance and accounting, gained in advisory and banking industry in Poland and London, covering various infrastructure projects in Europe – Poland, UK, Germany, Spain, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, Croatia and North America. Agnieszka has significant experience working within public sector on projects dedicated to public administration reform, SDGs, urban innovation, smart cities, digitalization and capacity building. She advised on development of investment strategies for Financial Instruments for various international financial institutions, as well as governments and ministries. She is well experienced in large programme

/ framework management, managing and leading large-scale projects while acting as advisors for public and private clients as well as multilaterals, esp. in the CEE Region.

**Noura Berrouba** is Vice President and Spokesperson for Human rights and Participation at the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU). She also oversees a network of 40 national associations of the European Youth Parliament (EYP) as a member of EYP's international board. Noura served as Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos in 2019, pushing for more global efforts on civic participation and education, and young people's societal inclusion. She serves on the boards of CONCORD Sweden and Høj Røsten School of Politics. Noura regularly provides expertise and advice to a variety of organizations and institutions, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the UN Population Fund, and many civil society organizations and think tanks. Noura is an advisor to the think tank Global Utmaning in the area of governance and economy. In 2018, she was appointed to the Swedish government's advisory council for environmentally sustainable consumption. In 2016, she was the Swedish Youth Delegate to the United Nations. Noura has interned for and worked at Sweden's Permanent Representation to the European Union, focusing on foreign and security policy, and MENA in particular. Noura now works as Programme Officer at the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. She is a Global Shaper, a youth initiative of the World Economic Forum. Noura studied public international law at the Swedish Defence University.

## Workshop facilitators & speakers

### Workshop 1 – Democratic institutions and meaningful youth engagement in decision-making

**Cristina Bacalso** is an independent research consultant, with a specialization in public policies for adolescent and youth development, youth participation, and advocacy. She has over 14 years of experience in policy, research, and advocacy, including 5 years as the Research Coordinator for Youth Policy Labs, a global think-tank specifically focusing on youth, and most recently, Adolescent Evidence Synthesis and Policy Advisor for UNICEF Innocenti. Her experience includes providing evidence-based strategic and policy advice on adolescents and youth for UN agencies (ex. UNICEF, UNDP SG Envoy on Youth), international NGOs, and national governments. She was the project lead for Youth Policy Fact Sheets, profiling 193 countries and the current state of youth policies, and the project and research lead for "Age Matters!", a multi-year, multi-country study on minimum age legislation. "Age Matters!" was selected as one of the top 10 projects for the Best of UNICEF Research Award 2019.

**Amela Šarić** comes from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Amela is a full-time employee of Transparency International's chapter in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the course of her employment, she works on the improvement and reform of public administration and gender equality, while also working on the enhancement of corporate governance and the monitoring of court trials. During her undergraduate studies, she was engaged in several internship programs through which she has gained practical experience in many areas out of which peace-building and conflict resolution and transformation which she finds the most important ones. Amela is also a member of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina's Youth Advisory Group. Working with youth and empowering them in reaching their full potential is one of the priorities of her career.

**Alice Bergholtz** has a long history of organizational commitments in the youth movement, centered on youth participation and youth engagement. She specializes in the field of diversity and inclusion within youth organizations to create new opportunities for youth to engage in democracy and their local and national societies. Alice has worked with youth policy on multiple levels, from grassroots organizations and local group to international institutions. Her Masters thesis investigated how young people express political participation and citizenship through media use, giving insight in how democratic structures of today are being influenced by the development of digital technologies.

### Workshop 2 – Youth activism and participation through non-conventional means

Psychologist in the human rights world. Emotional literacy trainer. Advocate for a lifelong learning, media freedom, gender equality and participation of youth in decision making processes. Active citizen driven by the conviction that any citizen can have a say in the shaping of society and that wider change starts from the inner one. **Milena Stosic** is the first ever OSCE Special Representative on Youth and Security, during the Serbian OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office in 2015, and was reappointed by the German CiO in 2016. For the last five years, she's been engaged with the OSCE Mission to Serbia on youth-related activities and is currently Mission's Youth Focal Point. Prior to that, she was developing youth policy expertise in the National Youth Council of Serbia and in the German-based network of young media makers – European Youth Press. She holds the European Commission's European Young Journalist Award. As a psychologist, she worked at the military hospital on the assessment and recruitment of military personnel.

**Irina Kuznecova** is a Programme Director at the DOTS Foundation for an Open Society (Latvia), which is a co-founder of the Latvian democracy festival – LAMPA Conversation festival: [www.festivalslampa.lv](http://www.festivalslampa.lv). She has been coordinating the festival's communication along with other tasks since its inception. She is a Vice-Chair of the International Democracy Festivals Association, which unites democracy festivals from the Nordic-Baltic region, including LAMPA, and the Brussels-based European democracy festival: [www.democracyfestivals.org](http://www.democracyfestivals.org).

**Diana Filimon** is a philologist by formation, civic activist by choice and an irredeemable dreamer, striving to make the world full of active and engaged free citizens. Community Leader of Digital Communication Network Romania, president and founder of Forum Apulum (civic NGO) and podcaster for FundAction (European network of activists), she focuses on discovering and growing the next generation of young leaders. With an experience of more than 15 years in communication and project management, she connects with activists from around the world in their fight for protecting democracy and is mentoring dozens of teenagers from Romania to prepare to take the power in the near future. She is a trainer on Media Literacy and storytelling, speaker at events at the intersection of civic activism and culture, writes occasionally for several publications in Romania and coordinates three podcasts, both national and international. During her career, she coordinated more than 70 projects in state institutions, as well as in corporations or in collaboration with NGOs from Europe, USA and Africa. In her free time she would love to be inspired enough to finish her book of poems, listen to her vinyls and write more articles.

**Weronika Myck** specializes in networks management, stakeholder consultations and knowledge management. In her current role in PwC she is responsible for bringing closer together experts from 29 territories within the Public Sector and Infrastructure network. Weronika joined PwC from the European Commission where she worked on innovation aspects of space and defense policies. She has a strong

background in think tank and non-governmental organizations management as well as advocating for wider civic participation in policy-making. Her experience in defense and youth-led organizations allowed her for participation in the progress study of the United Nations Security Council on their Resolution 2250 dedicated to Youth, Peace and Security. Over a decade of her engagement in the European Youth Parliament she has initiated the organization's governance reform, supported development of the network and participated in 30+ educational projects that reflected in a successful performance of over 300+ young Europeans.

### Workshop 3 – Civic education as a foundation for youth engagement

**Joanna Jasińska** is the Vice Curator of the Global Shapers Warsaw Hub, a network of young people all over the world driving positive change, Head of Operations at VCLeaders, an educational platform for VC professionals, and a journalist at the Polish Press Agency and The First News. Previously, she held several positions at the European Academy of Diplomacy. This year, she took part in the Climate Reality Global Training and became one of the Climate Reality Leaders – an international group of activists dedicated to fighting the climate crisis. In addition, Joanna is a communication and networking trainer.

**Varlam Badzaghua** is the Deputy Director of the Department of Diaspora Relations of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. His other professional experience includes serving as: the secretary of the Governing Council of “The Leuville Georgian Academy,” which is the memorial center of Georgia’s First Democratic republic in Leuville-Sur-Orge, France; the Expert of the Subcommittee of Diaspora issues, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in the Council of Europe; the Chairman of the Commission for the Status of Compatriots. The chairman of the Commission for Migration Policy Determination; the Head of Political Sciences and Associate Professor in University of Business Technologies in Tbilisi, Georgia; and the former head of department of Economic Development Service Investments and Investor Services in the Tbilisi City Hall, among other professional roles.

**Kesaria Kakabadze** graduated from Komarovi Boarding School, where she studied advanced mathematics, advanced physics, languages, computer and other sciences. She also studied at the British College INTO Manchester. Modules included mathematics, economics, business sciences. Kesaria is currently studying at the British State University, University of Exeter, on BSc in Accounting and Finance minor Economics. Where she studies finance, accounting, economics, taxation, law, management and auditing. Currently working as a Young Ambassador of Georgia to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, and at the same time works at Feele Lab, as Head of Economics and Experiments in Science, UK. She is also a study mentor at the University of Exeter.

### ODIHR team

**Augusta Featherston** serves as the Youth Focal Point in the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). In this role Augusta develops and oversees ODIHR's youth political participation portfolio, implementing activities designed to assist OSCE participating States meet their commitments in supporting the active participation of young people in promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Prior to ODIHR, Augusta served as the technical lead on youth engagement at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) advising on youth-specific program design, and other global youth initiatives. She also has extensive experience working with various youth-serving

organizations supporting young people in underserved communities in the United States through innovative literacy, technology, and leadership development programs. Augusta holds an M.A. in international development from the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver.

**Nino Chanturia** is an Associate Programme Officer at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Nino possesses experience in the area of democratization, EU integration, policy analysis, women's political empowerment and election observation. Nino has worked for OSCE/ODIHR EOMs since 2013. She chaired IRI's Women's Democracy Network in Georgia and acted as a project manager for "Women's Leadership Schools", a joint program of WDN and UNDEF. Nino has also served at the Embassy of Georgia to the Netherlands. She led various youth initiatives across Europe and was a board member of AEGEE-Europe's youth unemployment program. Nino holds an MPP degree from the Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, University of Erfurt and is a PhD candidate in the same university. Her doctoral research focuses on the EU's impact on association countries.

**Jolanta Cichocka** serves as the Senior Administrative Assistant, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Since 2005 Jolanta has provided administrative and project support to the Democratic Governance and Gender Unit in ODIHR. Before ODIHR, during 1992-2004 worked for the International Finance Corporation, Regional Office for Central Europe (World Bank Group) as the Office Manager and Program Assistant. She holds a Master's Degree from Institute of Applied Linguistics of the Warsaw University.

**Jacopo Leone** is from Italy and United Kingdom. He is Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Jacopo has been working as a political analyst in the field of democracy assistance and good governance for over ten years, with a specific focus on parliamentary strengthening, political party assistance, anti-corruption, public integrity, and civil society development. Currently as Chief of Democratic Governance and Gender Unit at ODIHR, he monitors political developments and provides assistance to OSCE participating States on a wide range of democratic governance issues, including strengthening integrity in parliaments and political party systems, promoting inclusive political institutions and youth and women's political participation. Before joining ODIHR, Jacopo Leone worked for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, NATO, the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the European Parliament. He holds an MSc in International and European Politics from the University of Edinburgh, with several academic articles published over the years on democratic governance issues.