



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

EDYNN
European Democracy Youth Network

A network supporting young pro-democracy activists, politicians and journalists

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MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP



Dear EDYN members, partners, and supporters,

As we look back on 2024, we are proud of the progress EDYN has made and deeply grateful for the continued support of our community. This year has been shaped by the strength of our members' collaboration, the building of new partnerships, and a collective dedication to promoting democracy across borders.

Across Europe and beyond, democracy is at a make-or-break moment. The erosion of democratic institutions poses risks of reversing hard-won freedoms and destabilizing global peace and security. We have witnessed the rise of authoritarianism and polarization, which further deepen social divides. These trends remind us that democracy is not guaranteed—it must be actively defended and strengthened. In 2024, important elections took place in several EDYN countries, including the European Parliament elections, with our GOTV campaigns contributing to boosting youth voter turnout.

Young people are crucial to democracy's survival. At EDYN, we recognize this potential and invest in empowering young leaders with the tools, networks, and knowledge to champion democratic values and drive meaningful change in their communities.

2024 was also a year of growth and impact for us. Our community expanded, welcoming over 150 new members who brought fresh perspectives and innovative ideas. We hosted and co-organized numerous events, including our Annual Conference in Bratislava, which fostered connections and collaboration to advance democratic advocacy. Our members led cross-partisan grassroots initiatives tackling youth engagement, hate speech, and misinformation, among others, showcasing the power of collective action despite ideological differences.

We also faced challenges, including political instability in some of our regions, direct threats to our members voicing dissent against their governments, and resource constraints. Yet these obstacles reinforced the resilience of our network, which reminded us of the importance of unity, adaptability, and partnerships in overcoming adversity.

Our achievements would not have been possible without the amazing support of our partners and donors—old and new. Your continued investment in EDYN is an investment in a brighter, more democratic future. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to our EDYN members and alumni, whose passion and dedication drive our mission forward.

As we kick off 2025, we are energized by the opportunities ahead. EDYN will continue to deepen partnerships, expand our impact, and empower young democratic leaders through new opportunities, capacity building, and resources to meet the challenges of our time. Together, we will continue safeguarding democracy and freedom for future generations.

On behalf of the Leadership Council and EDYN HQ, we thank you for your unwavering support. Your dedication fuels our mission, and we look forward to a future of shared progress.

With gratitude,



Lubica Kovacova
EDYN Executive Director



Mario Keputa
EDYN President

2. ABOUT EDYN

2.1. About us

Democracy in Europe is under threat. Its erosion risks reversing hard-fought freedoms and destabilizing global peace and security. The rise of authoritarianism brings greater censorship, human rights abuses and further division.

With over half the world's population under 30 years old, young people are key to democracy's survival. The European Democracy Youth Network (EDYN) counters the threat to democracy and offers a solution to this existential crisis.

EDYN empowers young civic and political leaders from across the ideological and political spectrum to become active in public life. Together with our members and donors, **we prepare new generations of changemakers.**

By promoting cross-partisan capacity-building, advocacy and increased participation of youth in governance, EDYN enables young people to refrain from the policies of hate and draft joint solutions for today's most pressing societal problems.

EDYN VALUES

Accountability

Anti-extremism

Respect

Constructive political engagement

Environmental consciousness

Transparency

Ethical behavior

Inclusion

Solidarity

Meritocracy

2.2. Structure and Governance

► EDYN HQ

Situated in Bratislava, Slovakia, EDYN HQ serves as the central hub supporting EDYN members and managing the entire network. Its responsibilities include overseeing activities, fundraising and communications. EDYN HQ also handles key internal processes, coordinates international events, manages network-wide external communications and administers digital platforms and strategic partnerships with organizations in the USA and Europe. EDYN HQ currently operates with a team of five employees.

► Board of Trustees

EDYN is an independent non-profit organization registered in Slovakia, governed by a Board of Trustees comprising seven distinguished members: Jonas Rolett, Kathryn Walt Hall, Peter Cari, Alison Kelly, Nicholas Whyte, Greg Strimple, and Caryn Eggeraat. Jonas Rolett currently serves as the Board's Chairman.

► NDI, IRI and USAID

The National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and USAID played a pivotal role in founding and supporting the growth of the EDYN. Now, EDYN is an independent organization based in Bratislava, Slovakia.

► EDYN Leadership Council

The Leadership Council (LC) serves as EDYN's representative and decision-making body.

In 2023, the LC included 14 EDYN Members:

- Mario Keputa, EDYN President, Albania
- Marija Bandulova Taseva, EDYN Vice-President, North Macedonia
- Vladislav Sazonov, EDYN Vice-President, Belarus
- Cristi Mariuta, Secretary General, Moldova
- Ana Gjidiqaj, Albania
- Albert Hayrapetyan, Armenia
- Marija Kovac, Croatia
- Nikola Kandic, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Giorgi Agirbaia, Georgia
- Blerta Blerisha, Kosovo
- Hubert Tadych, Poland
- Andra Costache, Romania
- Aleksandar Mijailovic, Serbia
- Rustam Savranskyi, Ukraine

The LC plays a vital role in representing EDYN on a global scale. Composed of dedicated young individuals, the LC communicates EDYN's goals and mission to international audiences, fostering partnerships with like-minded organizations and promoting EDYN's core values.

3. 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACT

3.1. Membership Growth

EDYN experienced significant growth in its membership in 2024, demonstrating young leaders' commitment to democracy across Europe. We are thrilled to report a substantial increase from 722 to 823 members, representing a robust 14% growth in just one year. This growth was achieved through a strategic combination of centralized and localized recruitment efforts. EDYN successfully organized one international recruitment round in the fall, complemented by six targeted off-cycle recruitments conducted by individual country chapters.

As our network matures, we also celebrate the growth of our Alumni community. We are proud to now have 75 alumni who continue to contribute to our mission, including through the newly established Alumni Advisory Board, composed of five alumni.

Looking ahead to 2025, EDYN is committed to building on this momentum and anticipates continued membership growth across all 23 countries, which will allow us to further our reach and impact across Europe and beyond.

**IN 2024, EDYN
GREW TO
OVER 820
MEMBERS**

EDYN 2024 IN NUMBERS

MORE THAN

300

**MEMBERS
participated in
EDYN activities**

35+

**INTERNATIONAL
PARTNERSHIPS**

700 000

**ACCOUNTS
REACHED
by EDYN's social media
accounts**

75

**ALUMNI
with a new Alumni Board**

40+

**PROJECTS AND
OPPORTUNITIES**

MORE THAN

27 000

**FOLLOWERS
across our platforms**

3.2. Key Activities & Projects

WORKSHOPS

► EDYN Leadership Workshops: Empowering Young Leaders

In 2024, EDYN hosted three transformative international workshops in Montenegro, Hungary, and Slovakia, equipping **42 EDYN members from 20 countries** with practical skills in **project management, diplomatic protocol, and fundraising**. Based on direct feedback from our member survey, these workshops provided hands-on training and networking opportunities, empowering participants to effectively manage projects, navigate international settings, and secure funding for their initiatives. Early results highlight the success of these workshops, with participants already applying their newly acquired skills, securing funding for their in-country activities, and initiating cross-border collaborations.



"I am very grateful for the opportunity to participate in this training, my first EDYN program. It has been incredibly valuable for networking and strengthening the EDYN bond. I appreciate the chance to

connect with EDYN members from other countries, which has broadened my understanding and enriched my experience."

Ani Tsintsadze, EDYN Georgia

► EDYN at Globsec's CEE Her Workshop in Vienna: Empowering Women in the Western Balkans

Four EDYN members - Amila Memic from BiH, Arbenita Krasniqi from Kosovo, Inesa Gupe from Albania and Simona Bishkoska from North Macedonia participated at GLOBSEC's CEE Her

Workshop in Vienna in July 2024. This exclusive visit empowered women through networking, skill-building, and high-level engagement. Participants benefited from inspiring fireside chats with prominent women leaders from organizations like CTBTO and OSCE, a meeting with Austrian Federal Minister Karoline Edtstadler, and an exchange with the former Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik.

Country	Members Total
Albania	80
Armenia	21
Azerbaijan	N/A
Belarus	N/A
Bosnia and Herzegovina	35
Bulgaria	10
Croatia	14
Czech Republic	22
Estonia	7
Georgia	67
Hungary	23
Kosovo	62
Latvia	4
Lithuania	4
Moldova	73
Montenegro	36
North Macedonia	63
Poland	31
Romania	19
Serbia	21
Slovakia	31
Slovenia	8
Ukraine	156
TOTAL	823

► EDYN at GLOBSEC's CEE Her Workshop in Brussels: Women in Security and Digital Space

Three EDYN members, Noemi Vegi from Slovenia, Ana-Mariia Mandzii from Ukraine and Agnieszka Komisarska from Poland participated at GLOBSEC's CEE Her Workshop in Brussels in April 2024. This study visit focused on empowering women in the fields of security and the digital space through networking, expert meetings, and skill-building sessions. The meetings featured engagements with NATO's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, Irene Fellin, representatives from the European Commission's DG JUST, European Parliament MEP Markéta Gregorová, Women in International Security (WIIS), and Microsoft.

STUDY VISITS

► Study Visit to NATO and Brussels: Empowering Women in Security and Tech

In partnership with NATO, EDYN brought ten women from across the NATO/EDYN region to Brussels for a study visit to strengthen the connection between the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda and democratic resilience. Through engaging in high-level discussions with representatives from NATO, the European Parliament, Google, and the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, the program equipped participants with the knowledge and tools to address the impact of gender-based disinformation and AI on democratic stability in the context of foreign malign influence and the evolving digital landscape. This initiative is a key component of EDYN's ongoing commitment to empowering and promoting women's leadership in security, tech, and innovation.





"I plan to integrate the lessons learned about disinformation and policy development into my cybersecurity awareness programs. Understanding how international organizations like NATO operate enhances my perspective when designing educational modules for companies and institutions."

Kamelisa Selami, EDYN Albania

► EDYN's Delegation to the U.S.: Strengthening Transatlantic Ties

EDYN partnered with the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) to bring eight emerging European leaders/EDYN members to the United States for an intensive week-long exchange. The program provided first-hand exposure to American government, politics, and culture, fostering transatlantic dialogue. Delegates engaged with U.S. Department of State officials, political consultants, and local leaders in Washington, D.C., and Portland, Oregon, gaining insights into U.S. policy, and federal and regional governance.



► Study Visit to Brussels with KAS: EU Enlargement and Western Balkans

In October 2024, at a key moment for EU enlargement with the new European Commission taking office and coinciding with Albania's historic opening of EU accession talks, EDYN, in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), organized a four-day study visit to Brussels for six young leaders: Inesa Gupe, Andrea Mazelliu and Valbona Halitaj from Albania, Aleksa Jankovic and Kristina Jankovic from Montenegro, and Bojan Lazarevski from North Macedonia. This timely initiative brought participants directly to the heart of EU decision-making, fostering engagement with key institutions, including the European Parliament (MEPs from the European People's Party and the Green Party), the European Commission (DG-NEAR), EEAS, and the Council of the EU. The study visit focused on the region's current challenges, including foreign malign influence, disinformation, and democratic

backsliding, and explored how the newly elected EU leadership will shape the future of these countries' European integration.



► Study Visit in Bratislava and Vienna: Participatory Budgeting and Youth Policies

From October 7-11, 2024, 12 international participants from six countries convened in Bratislava and Vienna for a study visit focused on participatory budgeting and youth-centered policies, under the Erasmus+ "Climbing the Ladder: Fostering a Culture of Youth Engagement" project. This study visit aimed to explore best practices in youth engagement and observe innovative participatory mechanisms. The two-city format allowed participants to compare youth challenges across borders, noting similarities despite geographical differences, including rural-urban disparities. Firsthand exchanges included discussions with UN Youth Delegates, EDYN activists, GLOBSEC, the European Commission Representation in Slovakia, Slovak and Austrian National youth councils, Vienna's Junges Wien initiative, and national authorities.

► Study Visit to Norway: Enhancing Youth Participation

Two Leadership Council members Vladislav Sazonov from Belarus and Cristi Mariuta from Moldova represented EDYN at a study visit to Bodø, Norway, in August 2024. Organized by our consortium partner Norland as part of the EU-funded Erasmus+ project on youth participation, the visit coincided with Bodø being a 2024 European Capital of Culture. The program focused on youth participation in policymaking, art therapy, and interculturalism, providing a platform for exchanging best practices and fostering intercultural dialogue on accessible and inclusive culture across European regions.

► Study Visit to Brussels: Local and Regional Democracy

In December, EDYN's Leadership Council member Aleksandar Mijailovic from Serbia represented the network at an Erasmus+ study visit to Brussels, organized by a consortium partner Assembly of European Regions. Focusing on youth empowerment, participation, and representation, participants discussed youth participation at regional and EU levels and explored practical actions for youth engagement in EU decision-making with EU institutions (EESC, EACEA, Committee of the Regions, Council of Europe) and

stakeholders (European Youth Forum, Belgian Youth Council).

CONFERENCES

► EDYN 2024 Annual Conference

EDYN held its annual conference in Bratislava, Slovakia, in April 2024. The event brought together EDYN members, the Board of Trustees, guests, and partners from different countries. The conference featured discussions and presentations on topics such as the state of democracy, youth engagement, and challenges facing European democracies with keynote speakers including representatives from the US and British Embassies to Slovakia, EDYN Board members, and youth leaders from across Europe. The conference served also as an opportunity for internal strategic discussions aimed at shaping the network's future direction. Participants collaborated to define EDYN's vision and set objectives for the Leadership Council and country chapters, focusing on maximizing the network's impact. The conference provided a vital platform for reflection, collaboration, and strategic planning, setting the stage for EDYN's continued growth and impact in the years to come.



► EDYN at the Western Balkans Summit 2024 in Sofia

EDYN representatives from six Western Balkans countries participated in an all-EDYN panel discussion at the annual Western Balkans Summit in Sofia, Bulgaria, in December 2024. Organized by the New Direction Foundation in partnership with the ECR group in the European Parliament, the panel focused on the future of EU integration for the Western Balkans and its impact on young people, addressing key issues such as youth participation, economic and security challenges, and the influence of regional relations on EU accession. The panel, moderated by Nikola Kandic, EDYN Leadership Council Member from Bosnia and Herzegovina, featured EDYN members Besar Gergi from Kosovo, Jetmir Asani from

North Macedonia, Megi Perduka from Albania, Amila Husić from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kristina Šćepanović from Montenegro, and Mirjana Jugović from Serbia.



► EDYN at the International Democracy Day in Brussels

EDYN was represented by Antonina Majchrzak from EDYN Poland at the annual International Democracy Day (IDD) conference on 15 September in Brussels, hosted by the European Partnership for Democracy. Antonina participated in the panel “Mobilizing Young People at the Ballot Box: Good Practices and Challenges” discussing the barriers young candidates face, including closed political systems, lack of funding, and unequal opportunities. She emphasized the resource gap between established politicians and newcomers, noting that young candidates often lack concrete resources like funding and media access, and advocated for support, mentorship programs, and equal access to resources, to create a more diverse and representative political landscape.

► Students for Liberty Conference

In April, EDYN partnered with Students for Liberty to provide EDYN Georgia members access to their annual three-day conference in Tbilisi. As Europe’s largest international pro-liberty gathering, the event addressed urgent threats to liberty, bringing together experts, politicians, activists, and over 600 guests. EDYN Georgia members also had an exclusive presence at the conference’s “Liberty Fair”, an exhibition for young leaders and activists to showcase their work and engage with attendees.

ROUNDTABLES AND DISCUSSIONS

► Breakfast Briefings on Gender-Based Disinformation, Misinformation and Hate Speech

In October and November, EDYN organized two breakfast briefings—one in Brussels and one in Washington, DC—bringing together stakeholders from EU institutions, NATO, the diplomatic corps, national governments, think tanks, the media, the private sector, youth networks, NGOs, and EDYN’s Board of Trustees. EDYN’s former President, Daryna Onyshko, was a speaker, along with EDYN HQ Executive Director Lubica Kovacova and Head of Partnerships and Philanthropy Carlotta Serili. In

Brussels, EDYN Board of Trustees member Nicholas Whyte spoke, while in Washington, DC, EDYN Board of Trustees Chairman Jonas Rolett addressed the attendees. These policy dialogues centered on how gender-based disinformation, misinformation and hate speech fuel gender polarization and deepen gender-based grievances and social cleavages. Through keynote speeches, presentations and Q&A sessions, we focused on how this phenomenon is compounded by social media and artificial intelligence and on how it negatively affects young women as it pushes them to select out of politics, activism and leadership positions.



► Strengthening Democracy through Intergenerational Dialogue in CEE

In November, as the European lead of the Global Democracy Coalition’s (GDC) “Thank You Democracy” campaign, EDYN hosted a regional intergenerational dialogue on strengthening democracy in Central and Eastern Europe in Bratislava. This event brought together 30 representatives from youth organizations, civil society, research institutes, and the diplomatic corps, including participants from Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, and Austria, alongside senior experts from organizations like NDI, GLOBSEC, and the Open Society Foundation. Through panels focusing on historical reflections, youth leadership, and current challenges, participants explored the state of democracy in CEE and discussed collaborative pathways for building more resilient democracies. The dialogue was part of a global initiative led by International IDEA and Club de Madrid.

► Roundtable Discussion on Empowering Youth Political Engagement

In December, EDYN partnered with GLOBSEC to co-organize a hybrid roundtable discussion on youth political engagement. The event brought together young leaders from political and civic organizations across Slovakia and Europe, including MEP Lucia Yar from Renew Europe. Discussions focused on enhancing youth involvement in politics following the European Parliament elections and the new European Commission’s formation.

COUNTRY CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

► EDYN HQ and Board of Trustees visits to 10 country chapters

In 2024 EDYN significantly strengthened its connection with country chapters and members through dedicated visits by the Board of Trustees and EDYN HQ staff. These visits spanned numerous country chapters, including the Czech Republic, Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia, and Ukraine. Key activities included workshops on campaign messaging and strategy led by our Board member Peter Cari. Internal chapter meetings, facilitated by EDYN HQ staff, Board members, and local chapter members, provided a platform for strategic discussions on membership development, EDYN's future direction, and local chapter priorities. The meetings with our membership, local partners, and stakeholders fostered valuable connections, new collaborations, projects, and activities, providing invaluable opportunities for direct engagement with our membership across Europe.



Croatia

EDYN Croatia implemented the project **"Together Against Hate Speech During Political Campaigns"** holding events in Osijek, Split, and Zagreb. Following two regional panel discussions in Osijek and Split, featuring youth representatives from major political parties the project culminated in a main event in Zagreb, where six youth political party representatives signed a Memorandum committing to refrain from using hate speech in election campaigns, particularly during the 2024 elections. This initiative gained significant media attention in Croatia.



Montenegro

EDYN Montenegro hosted and moderated youth-focused public discussions on electoral reform in Podgorica and the northern region in Bijelo Polje, bringing together representatives from political parties, national authorities, civil society, and youth. The aim was to bring a youth perspective into the discussion surrounding electoral reform in Montenegro and explore ways to enhance youth political participation. The events received significant media coverage.



North Macedonia

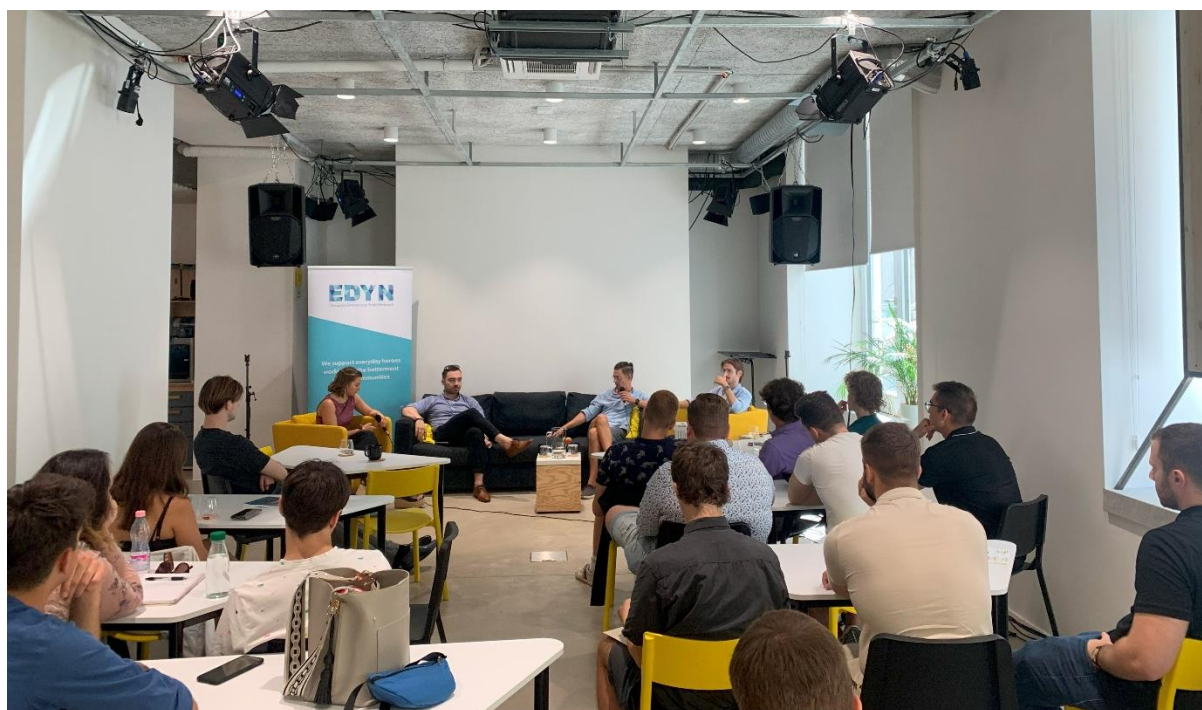
EDYN North Macedonia launched a robust social media campaign to engage young voters during the 2024 presidential and general elections. Featuring 20 members in online posters with impactful quotes and messages, the campaign reached over 1000 voters. Additionally, an eight-episode podcast series with active youth activists contributed to the discussions on democracy, youth concerns, and participation in public life.

Albania

EDYN Albania conducted four training sessions in 2024, focusing on key skills for its members. These included training on fundraising and project writing, project management, leadership skills, and Albania's EU integration process. These trainings contributed to consolidating and strengthening youth collaboration across different affiliations in Albania to achieve their goals.

Hungary

EDYN Hungary organized the **Open Summer University and Autumn series in 2024**. The Summer University, with approximately 30 participants, featured expert-led panel discussions and interactive workshops on foreign policy, economic policy, urban development, and public policy, fostering dialogue among young professionals, experts, and students. Following this success, an Autumn University event was held focusing on the U.S. election and its potential impact on Hungarian elections, education policy, and free media/press issues. This event featured expert-led panel discussions with six speakers and attracted 25 young participants.



Georgia

EDYN Georgia organized a series of activities with first-time voters across various regions, 80% of whom were first-time voters. The activities focused on EU and US funded educational opportunities and included discussions on Georgia's European integration process and the role of youth in democratic processes and elections. These efforts aimed to raise awareness of the importance of youth civic and political participation in Georgia.

Moldova

EDYN members from Moldova organized **training sessions on the benefits of EU integration** for Moldova, democratic values, and digital skills. The sessions engaged 15 participants, including youth from the regions of Orhei and Causeni. By prioritizing inclusion and outreach to regional and rural areas, the initiative fostered greater awareness and participation. It culminated in the production of 15 videos

showcasing the benefits of Moldova’s EU integration journey, effectively raising awareness during the election period.

Ukraine

EDYN Ukraine, a vibrant chapter, held significant youth-focused events in 2024, including the forum “Building Dialogue, Networking, and Youth Participation”, bringing together youth from across the country to address challenges Ukrainian youth face amidst the war. It also organized dialogues, networking opportunities, and trainings to enhance dialogue skills and strengthen youth networks among regional leaders.

Slovakia

In partnership with the US Embassy in Bratislava, Slovakia, EDYN members from Slovakia had the opportunity to participate in a **discussion about the US Presidential elections** at the US Ambassador’s residence with former White House national advisor, Mark Pfeifle and former Pennsylvania Democratic Congressman, Jason Altmire.



“Thanks to my position in EDYN, I got the opportunity to represent the network in the Republican Forum or at Campus Polska. Participating and moderating a discussion at Campus Polska, organized by a fellow Polish EDYN member, offered me a platform to exchange about the municipal, senate, and presidential campaigns with youth from V4 and more broadly, as well as explore avenues for enhancing the representation of young people in institutions such as the European Parliament.”

Jakub Rychly, EDYN Ambassador and Co-founder of Někračni, Czech Republic

“Today, more than ever, it is important to preserve democracy and its values. The society of the Western Balkans has been undergoing a transition for the past 30 years, and the instability of one country can easily threaten the entire region. What we must do, especially as young people and EDYN members, is to prevent negative phenomena and make positive changes every day at every step: protect the integrity of every country, improve the rule of law, and create a safe society.”



Vedrana Vujovic, Member of Parliament and EDYN Member, Bosnia and Herzegovina

4. COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

4.1. Statistics

In 2024, EDYN achieved remarkable growth and engagement across its social media platforms. The network's total audience, combining general profiles and Country Chapter profiles, expanded by 7% compared to 2023, reaching **27,453 followers**. EDYN's general profiles alone grew by 10%, now totaling 13,411 followers.

In terms of reach, the network engaged over **574,000 profiles** through its primary accounts. Together with the Country Chapter profiles, EDYN's collective reach **exceeded 700,000**

people, showcasing the strength of its coordinated social media strategy. Instagram, in particular, saw significant growth, with its reach increasing by 77% compared to 2023, thanks to more partnerships and successful campaigns. The detailed breakdown of EDYN's audience growth and platform performance is outlined in the tables below.

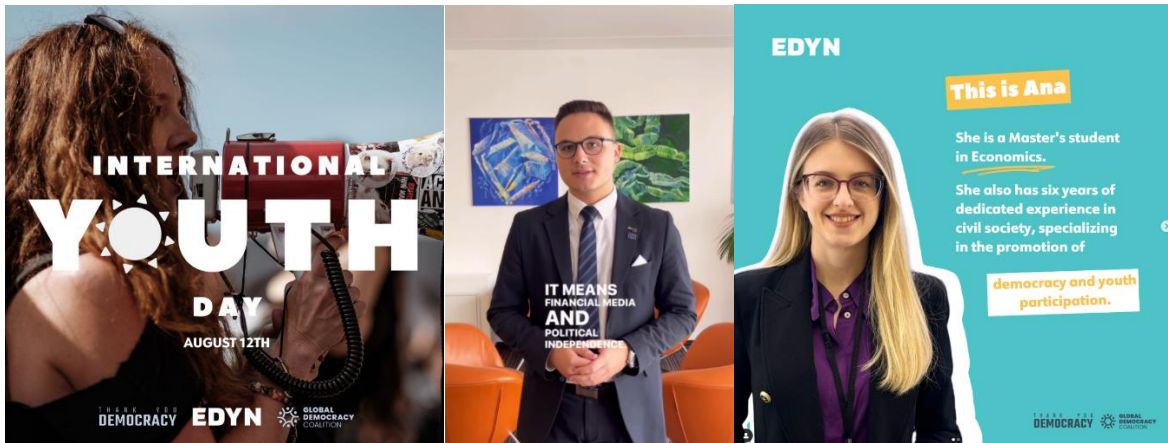
Audience Type	General	With CC
Facebook Page Likes	5,418	13,879
Instagram Followers	2,539	8,065
Twitter Followers	1,467	1,510
TikTok Followers	1,242	1,242
YouTube Subscribers	136	148
LinkedIn Followers	2,609	2,609
Summarized	13,411	27,453

Platform	Q1 2024	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	Q4 2024
Facebook Page Reach	15,735	11,700	8,600	15,700
Instagram Reach	109,342	173,200	11,200	25,800
YouTube Views	412	809	261	809
LinkedIn Impressions	17,022	12,917	5,747	11,000
Twitter Impressions	3,900	N/A	N/A	N/A
Summarized	146,692	202,807	29,979	57,480

4.2. Communication Campaigns

► Global Democracy Coalition - ThankYouDemocracy campaign

The #ThankYouDemocracy campaign, funded by International IDEA and Club de Madrid and led regionally by EDYN in Europe, aimed to amplify democratic values and inspire youth engagement. Between July and December 2024, EDYN implemented activities that included fifteen social media posts (including videos and graphics), a podcast episode, a media interview, and a regional dialogue event.



A key highlight was the podcast episode featuring young activists and EDYN members, [Jakub Rychly](#) and [Jakub Šuster](#), alongside business mentor [Veronika Šustrova](#). The discussion explored generational perspectives on democracy, with speakers sharing personal stories of life under socialism and the opportunities democracy has brought, aiming to inspire young listeners toward greater civic engagement.



The campaign also marked the 35th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall with an interview featuring Croatian politician and EDYN member Gabriela Bošnjak, who reflected on the significance of this historical event for freedom and democracy in Croatia. Published in regional media and on EDYN's website, the interview extended the campaign's reach to audiences beyond its immediate network.



The campaign concluded with a regional dialogue event in Bratislava, Slovakia, bringing together 30 participants, including youth activists, civil society leaders and senior experts to discuss democratic challenges and opportunities for youth in Central and Eastern Europe.

Despite relying solely on organic reach, the campaign successfully reached **19,350 accounts and generated 30,096 impressions**, amplifying democratic values and fostering collaboration among youth, policymakers and civil society.

► ReverseBrainDrain campaign

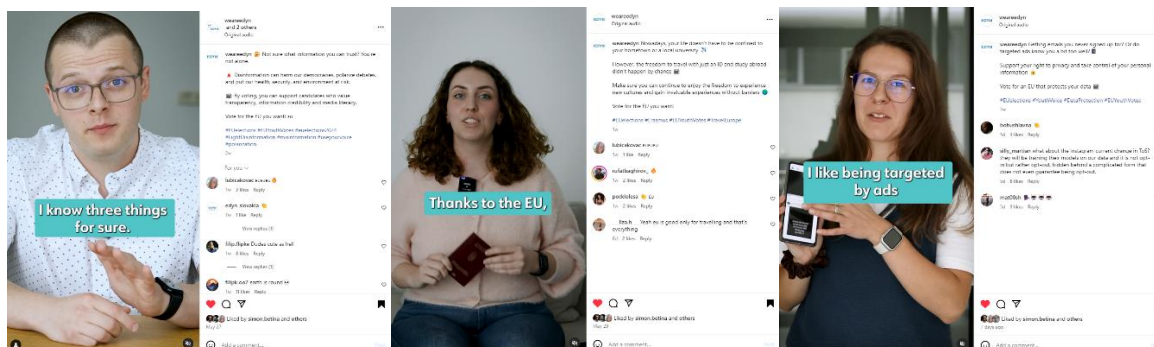
The #ReverseBrainDrain campaign, led by EDYN on Instagram and funded by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, highlighted the challenges faced by young people deciding whether to stay in their home countries or seek opportunities abroad. Through seven posts and 11 stories, the campaign showcased personal stories of young people committed to reversing brain drain and investing in their local communities.

The campaign achieved significant reach, engaging **173,772 accounts with 210,979 impressions and 210,727 video views**. Video content proved particularly impactful, with a video featuring an EDYN Slovakia member achieving a 45.8% engagement rate. The campaign also led to a 2% follower growth, underscoring its effectiveness.

► EUYouthVotes GOTV campaign

The #EUYouthVotes campaign, led by EDYN and funded by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, sought to boost voter turnout among Slovak youth ahead of the European Parliament elections. This nonpartisan initiative emphasized the critical role young voters play in shaping Europe's future, debunked stereotypes and disinformation about how European policy-making works, and addressed key topics such as environmental protection, disinformation, and digital privacy.

The campaign featured eight posts and eight stories, primarily leveraging Instagram to connect with its target demographic of Slovak youth aged 18–30. A focus on short, humorous videos proved highly effective, with content reaching **167,703 accounts, garnering 487,093 impressions, and achieving over 515,000 views**. The campaign's creative use of relatable scenarios and targeted ad placements contributed to Slovakia's historic increase in voter turnout, which reached a record high of **34,3%** (compared to 22,7 % in 2019).



4.3. Publications

In 2024, we published two publications as part of the 'Climbing the Ladder: Fostering a Culture of Youth Engagement' project funded by the European Commission. The project's mission is to raise awareness about the critical role of youth participation in policy-making and foster long-term impacts for youth engagement within local communities.

The first publication, **Models and Mechanisms of Youth Engagement**, laid the foundation by analyzing 24 models of youth participation at local, national and European levels. Using the innovative 'Thermometer of Engagement', it assessed diverse approaches – such as Youth Councils, Young Mayors, and Youth Banks – to evaluate their effectiveness and levels of youth involvement.



Building on these insights, the second publication, **Good Practices and Case Studies**, offers practical examples of how youth engagement can be effectively structured and implemented. Showcasing 18 innovative inclusive, and impactful practices from across Europe, it serves as a valuable resource for practitioners, decision-makers and youth organizations. By focusing on adaptability to diverse contexts, the publication supports the creation of dynamic environments where young people collaborate with policymakers to shape meaningful change and drive community progress.

5. DONORS & PARTNERS

5.1. Donors



► The **European Commission** through Erasmus+ and Horizon2040 grants that EDYN successfully secured between 2023 and 2024. The former is aimed at strengthening youth engagement across Europe by facilitating connections among youth workers and by identifying the most successful models for youth participation at the local, regional and national level in Europe. The latter - which officially began in January 2025 - seeks

to identify the youth's vision for what they think democracy in Europe should look like by 2040. Over the next three years, EDYN will elevate its members' voices through workshops, policy debates, youth-led advocacy campaigns, and engagements with institutions and policymakers across all EDYN country chapters and European capitals.

- The **Global Democracy Coalition, led by International IDEA and Club de Madrid**, funded our role in the global #ThankYouDemocracy campaign, which allowed us to elevate our members' voices in the fight for democratic principles and youth engagement.



- **The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** funded EDYN's core annual activities and supported EDYN HQ's institutional development. This was done through a subgrant administered by the **National Democratic Institute**.



5.2. Partners

- American Council of Young Political Leaders (USA);
- APCO (worldwide);
- Atlantic Council (USA);
- Center for International Private Enterprise (USA and Slovakia);

- ▶ CrowdAid (Italy);
- ▶ CulturePulse (USA and Slovakia);
- ▶ European Commission Erasmus+ grant consortium partners: DYPALL Network (Portugal), Europiamo (Italy), Nordland Fylkeskommune (Norway), YEPP Europe (Germany), the Assembly of the European Regions (Belgium) and SQ Learn (Greece);
- ▶ European Commission Horizon2040 grant consortium partners: Austrian Institute of Technology (Austria), Missions Publiques (Belgium and France), Strategic Design Scenarios (Belgium), WeDo (Spain), Make.org (Belgium and France), Fraunhofer ISI (Germany), the European University Institute (Italy), European Partnership for Democracy (Belgium), European Youth Forum (Belgium) and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Poland);
- ▶ GLOBSEC (Europe)
- ▶ Google Europe (Belgium);
- ▶ International Republican Institute (USA);
- ▶ Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (Belgium);
- ▶ NATO (Belgium);
- ▶ New Direction foundation (Belgium);
- ▶ Students for Liberty (worldwide);
- ▶ Summit for Democracy's Youth Democracy Cohort partners: European Partnership for Democracy, AfricTivistes, International IDEA, the European Commission's DG INTPA, Costa Rica's Ministry of Culture and Youth and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, Nepal's Ministry of Youth and Sports, National Youth Council, the National Planning Commission and the National Commission for Civic Education;
- ▶ UK Embassy in Bratislava (Slovakia);
- ▶ US Embassy in Bratislava (Slovakia);
- ▶ Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (Belgium).

6. INTERNAL PROCESSES AND GOVERNANCE UPDATES

In 2024, EDYN's 14-member-strong Leadership Council (LC), representing diverse countries within our network played an important role in shaping the organization's direction. The LC held virtual monthly meetings and convened in person in Bratislava, Slovakia, in April 2024. This retreat facilitated strategic discussions on the network's future and crucial updates to the EDYN Charter.

The LC also represented EDYN on the international stage at various international forums where LC members promoted EDYN's core values of depolarization, non-violence, and democracy. This fostered valuable collaborations, put EDYN's initiatives on the map, and garnered support from a diverse range of stakeholders. EDYN LC also issued a statement on the situation in Georgia, unequivocally condemning the reintroduction of the bills "On Transparency of Foreign Influence" and "On Registration of Foreign Influence Organizations" in the Georgian Parliament.

6.1. EDYN Charter updates

Key Governance Updates to the EDYN Charter:

The EDYN Charter underwent significant updates in 2024, marking a major step forward in organizational governance. These updates, driven by the LC and the EDYN HQ, included:

- ▶ Establishing guidelines for country chapter legal entities, enabling more effective operation and independent fundraising at the local level.
- ▶ Establishing the Advisory Alumni Board to provide strategic guidance, mentorship and expertise to fellow members.
- ▶ Streamlining internal processes, including simplifying the Ambassador Elections and removing the annual requirement for signing the Code of Conduct, reducing administrative burdens and increasing efficiency.
- ▶ Launching a Strategic Vision Working Group to define EDYN's long-term direction, ensuring the network remains impactful and adapting to evolving challenges and opportunities in the years to come.

6.2. 2025 EDYN Presidential and Leadership Council Elections

The annual Leadership Council and Presidential Elections were held in November and December 2024. EDYN Ambassadors nominated candidates for EDYN President and cast their votes with a 71% voter turnout. Two candidates ran for the presidency: Giorgi Agirbaia from Georgia and Jakub Rychly from the Czech Republic. **Giorgi Agirbaia was elected as the EDYN President for 2025** (34 votes versus 10).

The 14-member 2025 Leadership Council includes representatives from USAID-presence countries and three representatives from non-USAID presence countries. EDYN members have the right to cast their vote for their national or regional representatives.

The elected LC members are the following:

- ▶ Giorgi Agirbaia (EDYN President, Georgia)
- ▶ Ana Gjidiqaj (Vice President, Albania)
- ▶ Hubert Tadych (Vice-President, Poland)
- ▶ Petru Crețu (Secretary General, Moldova)
- ▶ Greta Harutyunyan (LC Member, Armenia)
- ▶ Vladislav Sazonov (LC Member, Belarus)
- ▶ Amila Husić (LC Member, Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- ▶ Daviti Esatia (LC Member, Georgia)
- ▶ Blerton Vehapi (LC Member, Kosovo)
- ▶ Bojan Lazarevski (LC Member, North Macedonia)
- ▶ Aleksandar Mijailović (LC Member, Serbia)

- ▶ Yuliia Dziuba (LC Member, Ukraine)
- ▶ Ana Puljić (LC Member, Croatia)
- ▶ Jan Gondek (LC Member, Czech Republic)

6.3. Ambassadors' Elections

The network conducted the Ambassador Elections in May and June 2024, electing dedicated individuals to represent the network within their country chapters and contribute to EDYN's mission. Each chapter could elect up to seven Ambassadors, based on membership size (i.e. one Ambassador for every seven members). Candidates must demonstrate involvement in their community's political and social life, a track record of political and civic leadership, and adherence to EDYN's values and principles. Members with over six months of membership and under 33 were eligible to run and vote via anonymous electronic voting. The process, timeline, rules and procedures were defined by the Leadership Council and the Election Committee, as outlined in the EDYN Charter and Election Committee Guidelines.

A total of **62 Ambassadors** were elected to represent EDYN in their chapters.

6.4. Advisory Alumni Board

The EDYN Advisory Alumni Board kicked off its work in 2024 with five initial members. This Board serves as the primary external advisory body for the EDYN network, providing strategic guidance, expertise, and mentorship support to the Leadership Council, EDYN HQ, and members in achieving network-wide and chapter-specific goals. The Alumni Board holds a purely advisory role, without decision-making powers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

As we reflect on 2024, we are filled with **immense gratitude** for the individuals, organizations and supporters who made this an extraordinary year for the European Democracy Youth Network.

To our members: your unwavering commitment to fostering democracy, resilience, and collaboration across our region continues to inspire us and energize our mission. Your innovative ideas and tireless efforts have built bridges, challenged norms, and driven meaningful change in our communities. In particular, we stand in awe of those in our network who do so despite living under authoritarian regimes or bearing the weight of active conflict in their country. As challenges to democracy rise across our continent, we look forward to continuing our much-needed work in the new year.

To our donors: your generous support has empowered us to dream bigger and reach further. Your belief in the transformative power of youth and your investment in our vision have been critical to our growth and success in 2024. We couldn't do what we do without you.

To our partners: thank you for standing by us as we navigate emerging challenges to democracy in our region. Your expertise, collaboration, and shared values have enriched our programs, widened our members' own networks, and expanded our impact.

This year's accomplishments would not have been possible without **each of you**. Democracy is at a make-or-break moment on our continent. At a critical time for our mission, we believe empowering young people to meaningfully engage in civil society is the best investment for a peaceful, democratic Europe. Together, we stand strong to shape a brighter, **more democratic future** for youth across Central and Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, and the South Caucasus.

In 2025, EDYN will focus on amplifying members' impact in their communities and beyond. We will do so through capacity-building opportunities, support to member-led projects with local and regional impact, and cross-border collaboration. **Advocacy** will also remain at the heart of our mission. Through strategic campaigns and partnerships, we will amplify the voices of young democratic leaders, showcase the value of unity, and push back against the rise of authoritarianism, polarization and disinformation. In this new year, we also plan to strengthen our partnerships with new and existing allies to maximize the reach of our pro-democracy initiatives.

Thank you for being part of this journey. If you'd like to keep fueling our mission, please consider donating to us by following this [link](#).

With gratitude,

THE EDYN HQ TEAM



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