



EDYN

European Democracy Youth Network

CHARTER

PREAMBLE

The **Charter of the European Democracy Youth Network (EDYN)** is the organization's general and highest internal governance document. It defines and regulates the rights, obligations, composition, and internal processes within and among the various bodies of EDYN, as well as its members. All members of EDYN are obliged to comply with this Charter and to conduct themselves in accordance with its provisions throughout the duration of their membership.

EDYN is a non-profit organization registered in Slovakia, committed to building and supporting greater civic and political leadership among young people in Europe. Its mission is to empower young pro-democracy activists, politicians, and journalists—ages 18 to 35—from across the political and ideological spectrum. The network spans 23 countries with a shared experience of totalitarianism. EDYN unites those who reject hate-based and divisive politics and instead strive to strengthen their societies against the threats posed by authoritarian revisionism.

Members of EDYN are guided by a shared set of values as enshrined in the **Berlin Declaration**, a foundational document that defines the ethical and ideological framework of the network. These values include **inclusion, anti-extremism, transparency, accountability, constructive political engagement, solidarity, respect, ethical behavior, meritocracy, and environmental consciousness.**

As part of their commitment to EDYN, members pledge to uphold **fundamental rights and freedoms**, refrain from all forms of **hate speech**, and engage in **cross-ideological collaboration** to address the pressing challenges facing their communities. Members are also expected to cultivate the **knowledge, character, and skills** that can be applied in service of the public good.

In addition, EDYN upholds a strict commitment to the protection of personal data. All members are required to comply with the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** and adhere to EDYN's internal data protection policies. The **EDYN GDPR Handbook** outlines specific procedures and responsibilities related to the handling of personal information, and is available for all members to consult at www.edyn.eu/GDPR. Members are expected to familiarize themselves with this document and follow its provisions without exception.

This Charter provides the structural, procedural, and ethical foundation of EDYN and reflects the network's enduring commitment to democratic renewal, inclusive leadership, and civic resilience across Europe.

I. Network Structure

EDYN President

The EDYN President serves as the primary representative of the network and chairs the Leadership Council (LC). The President plays a pivotal role in providing strategic leadership, promoting the network externally, and fostering cohesion among the Country Chapters.

Eligibility and Election Procedure

Any EDYN member who has actively participated in the network for at least six (6) consecutive months is eligible to run for President. Presidential candidates must demonstrate a strong commitment to EDYN's mission and values and possess leadership experience within the network.

The election of the President follows a multi-step, democratic process:

- The election process is **coordinated by the Country Leads** in consultation with EDYN HQ, every two years, typically in November.
- **Each Country Chapter conducts a national vote using anonymous and secure electronic voting platform chosen by the Country Chapter** (e.g., Adoodle). All members in good standing are entitled to vote.
- The Country Lead submits the results of the national vote to EDYN HQ and the Leadership Council.
- The Leadership Council officially elects the EDYN President based on the aggregated national results, with **each Country Chapter having one (1) vote, cast by its elected Country Lead**, which will represent the result of his/her chapter's national vote. The President is elected by a simple majority of all valid votes cast by the Country Leads during the Leadership Council meeting convened for this purpose. In the event of a tie, a run-off vote shall be held.

Mandate

The President serves a non-renewable term of **two (2) years**. In the event of resignation, incapacitation, or removal, the Leadership Council shall organize a new election in accordance with the procedures outlined above.

Key responsibilities

- Chairing meetings of the Leadership Council and facilitating strategic discussions.
- Acting as a spokesperson for the network and promoting EDYN's vision and activities.
- Collaborating closely with EDYN HQ and the Board of Trustees to ensure alignment between the strategic direction and operational implementation.

- Supporting the work of Country Leads and ensuring cohesion across Country Chapters.
- Collaborate with EDYN HQ in representing EDYN in external engagements, including – when asked by HQ – with institutional partners, civil society organizations, and donors.

Country Leads and Leadership Council (LC)

Country Leads

Each Country Chapter elects one (1) Country Lead, who serves both as the leader of the Country Chapter and as its representative on the Leadership Council (LC). The Country Lead is responsible for coordinating local activities, fostering member engagement, and serving as the primary liaison between the chapter and EDYN HQ.

Election Process:

- Elections for Country Leads are conducted every two (2) years, typically in **November and December, organized by the Country chapter and managed by the current Country Lead**, using anonymous electronic voting platforms (e.g., Adoodle).
- All members in good standing are eligible to vote and to run.
- The election process is overseen by EDYN HQ to ensure transparency, fairness, and adherence to democratic standards.
- The candidate with the most votes and simple majority becomes the Country Lead. In the event of a tie, a run-off vote shall be held.

Mandate:

- Country Leads serve a **two-year term**, with the possibility of re-election for additional terms.

Key responsibilities:

- Coordinating chapter operations and ensuring regular member engagement.
- Organizing national-level activities and initiatives aligned with EDYN's values and goals.
- Leading the recruitment process of new members in consultation with EDYN HQ.
- Participating in Leadership Council meetings and decisions.
- Promoting EDYN's public image and maintaining positive relations with local stakeholders and partners.

Leadership Council (LC)

The Leadership Council is EDYN's central deliberative and decision-making body, composed of all Country Leads and the EDYN President. The LC guides the network's strategic development, supports cross-country collaboration, and ensures member

representation at the highest level.

Composition and Election of Officers:

- LC is composed of one President and maximum of **23** Country Leads (representing 23 countries belonging to EDYN)
- LC elects two **Vice Presidents** and one **Secretary General** from among its members. They are elected by simple majority and serve terms concurrent with their LC mandate.
- LC members serve **two-year terms** and may be re-elected again.

Key responsibilities:

- Contributing to the strategic planning and growth of the network.
- Advising on the design and implementation of programs and initiatives.
- Promoting civic engagement, democratic participation, and values-driven leadership.
- Facilitating information exchange, peer learning, and joint activities among Country Chapters.
- Representing EDYN at regional and international levels and cultivating external partnerships.

Leadership Council members are expected to act in the best interest of the entire network, foster inclusive participation, and maintain a high standard of integrity and accountability in all their activities.

Committees and Working Groups

The Leadership Council may establish thematic working groups or temporary committees on an as-needed basis to address specific issues or opportunities. EDYN HQ engages interested members in areas such as communications, fundraising, and oversight of the election process.

Country Chapters

EDYN's structure is composed of national-level groups referred to as **Country Chapters**. Each Country Chapter encompasses all officially confirmed EDYN members residing or operating within a given country.

Legal and Organizational Structure

Country Chapters may operate either:

- **Informally**, without legal registration, in which case they are directly supported and coordinated by EDYN HQ; or
- **Formally**, as legally registered entities (e.g., associations or foundations). In such cases, a **Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC)** must be signed with EDYN HQ to ensure alignment with the broader EDYN network, particularly regarding use of the brand, mission, values, and funding.

Country Coordinators

Each Country Chapter is encouraged to establish internal roles such as **Country Coordinators** to support its operations and strengthen its activities. This role is distinct from the **Country Lead**, who serves as the official representative of the Chapter. There can only be one Lead per Chapter, but multiple Country Coordinators may be voted in by the Country Chapter members as needed. Country Coordinators may assist with specific tasks such as outreach, communications, event coordination, or policy work. Chapters are also encouraged to develop additional internal structures tailored to their specific needs, capacities, and national context, while remaining aligned with EDYN's democratic and participatory values.

II. Membership

Membership Criteria

EDYN remains a membership-based organization composed of young leaders from 23 countries. All members must be aged between 18 and 35, be citizens or residents of an EDYN country and be citizens or current residents (temporary or permanent) of an EDYN country (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine) and demonstrate a track record of civic or political engagement. Membership is voluntary and based on a shared commitment to the network's values.

Member Rights and Benefits

Members of EDYN have access to a range of opportunities, including participation in international trainings, conferences, exchange programs, and member-driven initiatives. Members may also hold leadership positions within their country chapters or be elected to serve as Country Leads or President. Through their involvement in EDYN, members become part of a diverse and growing network of changemakers across Europe.

Member Responsibilities

All members are expected to uphold EDYN's values of inclusion, transparency, solidarity, and ethical behavior. They must abide by the EDYN Code of Conduct, reject extremism and hate speech, and commit to constructive cooperation across political and cultural divides. Active participation in the network is required, with members asked to contribute at least two hours per month or take part in at least one EDYN activity per quarter.

Transition to Alumni Status

Upon the conclusion of a member's active engagement with EDYN by reason of **reaching the age of thirty-five (35), said member shall be designated as an Alumnus/Alumna of the Network.** The Network acknowledges the valuable experience of its Alumni and encourages their continued association with EDYN. It is the intent of the Network to maintain a lifelong connection with Alumni, including through the **Alumni Advisory Board.** EDYN shall, where feasible, extend invitations to Alumni for engagement in conferences, seminars, workshops, and other relevant activities. The Network promotes a culture of mentorship and knowledge transfer. Alumni are thus encouraged to serve in an informal capacity as mentors to present members of EDYN, providing guidance, sharing expertise, and offering insights gained during and subsequent to their tenure with the Network.

III. Recruitment and Opportunity Selection

Recruitment Process

The recruitment of new EDYN members shall be conducted on an **annual basis**, with the selection **cycle taking place in April and May of each calendar year.** This timing is designed to ensure alignment with other core activities of the network, including the scheduling of elections and onboarding procedures. The specific timeline will be set by the LC and the EDYN HQ at the LC's meeting in February. The timeline will generally follow this structure:

Recruitment Timeline

- 1. Publication of the Call / Recruitment Open**

Duration: **2 weeks**

The call for applications will be published and kept open for submissions during this period.

- 2. Review of Applications & Selection Process**

Duration: **2 weeks**

Applications will be reviewed, and a selection of successful candidates will be made.

- 3. Notification of Results**

Duration: **1 week**

A finalized list of selected and rejected applicants will be prepared. All applicants will be informed of the outcome.

- 4. Data Submission to EDYN HQ**

Deadline: **Within 1 week** after applicants are informed

Relevant information about accepted candidates will be shared with EDYN HQ for inclusion in the network's database.

The recruitment process shall be led and administered by each Country Chapter, under the coordination of the respective Country Lead. Each Chapter is required to establish a **Selection Board**, which shall be composed of a **minimum of three members** of the Country Chapter who are in good standing with the network. The Selection Board is responsible for managing the national recruitment process in a fair, transparent, and inclusive manner. **In cases where country chapters have EDYN Country Coordinators, they automatically become the Selection Board.**

All applicants must complete a **standardized application form** issued by EDYN HQ. This form will be uniform across the entire network to ensure consistency and comparability in the evaluation process. Country Chapters may, with prior approval from EDYN HQ, include supplementary questions or criteria that reflect their local context or specific programmatic needs, provided these additions remain in compliance with EDYN's values and selection standards.

The responsibilities of the Country Chapter Selection Board include:

- Publicizing the call for applications together with the application form through appropriate and accessible channels based on the timeline set by the LC and the EDYN HQ.
- Reviewing all submitted applications in a timely and impartial manner and according to the timeline which sets the reviewing within 2 weeks after the closing of the open call.
- Conducting interviews with shortlisted candidates, if applicable and/or necessary.
- Preparing and submitting a ranked list of recommended candidates to EDYN HQ for final review and confirmation according to the timeline set by the LC and the EDYN HQ.
- Informing the accepted and rejected applicants and onboarding the new members.
- Providing EDYN HQ with the necessary information about the accepted candidates for the main members' database within a week after informing the accepted and rejected applicants.

EDYN HQ retains the right to review and, if necessary, veto any selection that is inconsistent with the strategic priorities of the network or that violates the principles and values enshrined in the Berlin Declaration. This veto power is intended to safeguard the integrity of the recruitment process and ensure that all incoming members align with EDYN's commitment to democratic values, inclusion, and diversity.

Upon completion of the review by EDYN HQ, successful applicants shall receive formal confirmation of their membership status and be onboarded into the network in accordance with established procedures. **All new members must agree to uphold the EDYN Charter and Code of Conduct as a condition of their membership.**

This structured recruitment process ensures that the selection of members is consistent, equitable, and aligned with EDYN's mission to support young leaders dedicated to democracy, civic engagement, and cross-partisan collaboration.

Selection for International Opportunities

For international events funded by EDYN HQ or partner organizations—such as workshops, trainings, study visits, or summer schools—EDYN HQ will oversee the selection process.

- **When EDYN is solely responsible for the selection,** the process will be managed internally by EDYN HQ. In this case, applications will first go through an eligibility check. Then, a selection committee—comprising two EDYN HQ staff members and two representatives from the standing LC—will evaluate candidates based on motivation, diversity, and prior engagement with EDYN. Final selections will also take into account gender balance, geographic distribution, political and civic diversity, and applicant backgrounds.
- **When the selection is conducted in collaboration with partner organizations,** EDYN HQ will not involve LC representatives in the process. Instead, it will follow the selection procedures and criteria provided by the partner organization and/or specific project. This may include restrictions on eligible countries and other partner-defined parameters.

Selection for Profile-Specific Opportunities

When an opportunity requires a participant with a specific background and/or profile and/or gender and/or nationality, EDYN HQ will consult the Country Lead of the relevant chapter. The Country Lead will suggest suitable candidates, and EDYN HQ will coordinate the final selection and communication with the chosen nominee.

Selection for Local Opportunities

Local events and opportunities will be managed by the respective Country Chapters. The Country Lead is responsible for managing and overseeing the selection process, either individually or with support from other members of the country chapter who can form a local selection committee. Final selections must be reported to EDYN HQ for record-keeping and alignment purposes.

Selection for Strategic and Fundraising Events

For events critical to the financial sustainability and visibility of the network—such as fundraising trips, high-level meetings, or strategic missions—the selection of participants will be made by the EDYN HQ’s Executive Director and approved by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. These decisions will be made in alignment with EDYN’s strategic priorities and long-term interests.

IV. EDYN HQ Responsibilities

EDYN Headquarters (HQ), **based and registered as an NGO in Bratislava, Slovakia**, serves as the **central management and coordination body of the network**. It provides strategic, administrative, and operational support to ensure the effective functioning, institutional development, and long-term sustainability of EDYN. EDYN HQ plays a leading role in safeguarding the network’s vision, mission, and values, while maintaining consistency and accountability across all EDYN structures.

EDYN HQ is responsible for **overseeing internal governance processes**, including collaboration with the Leadership Council, implementation of network-wide policies and procedures, and administration of membership mandates. It **assures the alignment of activities with EDYN’s Charter** and proposes adjustments to the Charter and other governance documents where necessary. EDYN HQ is in charge of fundraising, representing the network externally to donors and partners, **maintaining institutional memory, administers EDYN’s digital platforms and official records**.

In terms of network development, EDYN HQ leads strategic planning and impact measurement. It oversees the chapters’ recruitment process and officially confirms EDYN membership as well as Presidential and Leadership Council mandates in accordance with applicable selection or election procedures. **HQ is empowered to revoke LC and Presidential mandates in cases of violations of EDYN’s core values or commitments**.

EDYN HQ is the primary external representative of the network and engages with partners, donors, and stakeholders to advance EDYN’s mission. It oversees donor relations, including fundraising, grant management, financial and narrative reporting, and bookkeeping. It is also responsible for administering and safeguarding EDYN’s trademarks and brand identity, including licensing EDYN branding to Country Chapters in compliance with network standards.

Additionally, EDYN HQ organizes and manages international EDYN activities and events, including **the selection of participants as written in this charter**.

By centralizing strategic leadership, operational coordination, and external representation, EDYN Headquarters ensures the coherence, visibility, and impact of the network across all levels of engagement.

V. Oversight and Strategic Governance

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees serves as the **highest oversight and supervisory authority of EDYN HQ**, the legal entity registered in the Slovak Republic. As stipulated in the statutes of EDYN HQ, the Board of Trustees is responsible for providing strategic leadership, financial oversight, and institutional accountability. It ensures that the operations and development of EDYN HQ are aligned with the organization's mission, values, and long-term vision.

The Board of Trustees has a **minimum of three members** and functions as the governing body to which the EDYN HQ is accountable. It is vested with the authority to set the strategic direction of the organization in consultation with the Leadership Council and EDYN HQ, and is responsible for defining institutional priorities and guiding the overall development of the network.

Key responsibilities of the Board of Trustees include:

Setting the vision and strategic objectives of EDYN HQ; overseeing financial operations, including approval of budgets, financial statements, and audit reports; ensuring compliance with the statutes of EDYN HQ and the EDYN Charter; monitoring alignment with EDYN's core values as enshrined in the Berlin Declaration; appointing and supervising the executive leadership of EDYN HQ; and supporting high-level fundraising, institutional partnerships, and organizational sustainability.

The Board also acts as a guardian of the network's integrity and reputation, intervening in cases where there is a potential breach of fiduciary responsibility, ethical standards, or core values. Through its supervisory role, the Board of Trustees ensures that EDYN HQ operates with transparency, efficiency, and in the best interest of the entire network.

Alumni Advisory Board

The Alumni Advisory Board serves as the **primary external advisory body of EDYN**. Its purpose is to provide **strategic guidance, mentorship, and support to EDYN HQ, the Leadership Council, and members of the network**. Operating in a strictly advisory capacity, the Board holds no decision-making authority. Instead, it contributes through the collective experience, expertise, and networks of its members, supporting the achievement of both network-wide and country chapter-

specific goals.

The Board plays a key role in strengthening intergenerational exchange, enhancing the development of national chapters, and reinforcing EDYN's mission, visibility, and impact. It supports efforts to foster meaningful youth engagement in democracy and offers practical guidance on strategic priorities, partnerships, and long-term development.

Members of the Alumni Advisory Board are selected from among **EDYN alumni who are 35 years of age or older. Nominations may be submitted by at least two members of the Leadership Council, the EDYN President, or EDYN HQ. Candidates are appointed through a simple majority vote of the Leadership Council. The term of service is two years**, with the possibility of renewal. Board members elect a Chair who is responsible for coordinating Board meetings and maintaining communication with relevant EDYN bodies.

The Alumni Advisory Board meets at least once per quarter. Extraordinary sessions may be convened at the request of the Leadership Council, EDYN HQ, or Country Chapters. Members of the Board are expected to demonstrate ongoing commitment to EDYN's mission and values, and to contribute actively to the advancement of the network by offering their time, strategic insight, and professional connections.

VI. Amendments

EDYN HQ – together with the Board of Trustees – retains veto power over any changes to the charter. Changes to the charter are drafted and proposed by EDYN HQ after consultations with the standing Leadership Council. Amendments to this charter or any documents referenced herein shall be approved with the consent of **two-thirds of sitting LC members.**