

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate distribution

Invitation to a press conference on empowering young people for political participation

Riga, 17 March 2015 – Next week, from 23 to 26 March, about 260 young people and policy-makers will work side by side at the EU Youth Conference, a four-day event in Riga, to discuss pathways to youth empowerment for political participation.

Organised under the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the EU, together with the European Youth Forum and the National Youth Council of Latvia, the conference will seek ways to increase involvement of young people in the democratic life of Europe. Joint recommendations drawn up as a result of the conference, will be brought to attention of the EU Youth Ministers at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council on 18 May 2015.

Journalists are welcome to attend the press conference on 24 March at 10:30 in the Hall *Berline* of Bellevue Park Hotel Riga, Slokas iela 1. Participants of the press conference include Ms Mārīte Seile, Latvian Minister for Education and Science, Mr Antonio Silva Mendes, Director for Youth and Sport of Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, Ms Iveta Kažoka, researcher at the Centre for Public Policy *PROVIDUS*, and Ms Johanna Nyman, President of the European Youth Forum.

Accredited media are welcome to attend the conference. Accreditation form available here: <https://media.eu2015.lv/php/login.php>. Please send any questions regarding media accreditation to: mediaaccreditation@es2015.lv

More details on the event, including the media program are available on the Presidency website: <https://eu2015.lv/events-ical/eu-youth-conference-2015-03-23>

A number of barriers that limit political participation of young people have previously been identified by various studies. These include absence of legal frameworks; lack of citizenship education; inability and unwillingness of politicians to engage with young people in political processes; lack of a participatory culture within educational establishments; insufficient involvement and insufficient financial resources.

Five months prior to the EU Youth Conference, a broad consultation was carried out with more than 40 000 young people, as well as policy-makers in all the EU countries. Called the Structured Dialogue, this exercise is a continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation, and follow-up of European cooperation in the youth field.

Live stream from the official opening, the introductory session, panel discussions and closing of the conference available on www.eu2015.lv. Please note that Latvian time is one hour ahead of Brussels time.

Follow the EU Youth Conference on Facebook.com/euyouthconfriga
Hashtag for Twitter: #youthconf

Contacts:

Ieva Nora Firere, Senior Communication Expert
Ministry of Education and Science
Phone: +371 67047784; +371 29146366
E-mail: ieva.firere@izm.gov.lv
www.izm.gov.lv