

CALL FOR APPLICATION

“YOUNG LEADERS XXXIII” 2026/2027

We are pleased to inform you that the Robert Schuman Institute (RSI), with the support of the Eduardo Frei Foundation (EFF) and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), is opening the call for application for its upcoming flagship series of courses entitled “Young Leaders XXXIII”. The courses, articulated in three modules, will take place between **23 – 28 November 2026 in Budapest, Hungary; 25 – 30 January 2027 in Budapest, Hungary and 22 – 26 February 2027 in Vienna, Austria**. The series is open to young politicians from Eastern and South-Eastern European countries (EE, SEE) such as *Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine* as well as *Lebanon and Morocco* (MENA), committed to Christian Democratic / centre-right values and pluralist democracy, as represented by the European People’s Party (EPP) and aiming to become future leaders. Also, limited number of places are available to like-minded civil society leaders too.

I. Project description

Aims of the project:

- **To educate** future political leaders by equipping them with theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to handle political, social, cultural, economic and civic challenges and developments in Europe and beyond;
- **To reflect** on the fundamental values of democracy, Christian Democracy, and the principles uniting the EPP family, emphasising their practical implementation in concrete policies and decision-making;
- **To promote** the public roles and careers of young people belonging to parties / organisations of the EPP family in EE, SEE and MENA regions by means of education and training, information exchange and network-building.

Target group:

15 public career-oriented progressive young politicians and civic leaders between 22 – 35 years of age who are actively involved in EPP sister parties’ activities in the above-listed countries. They will be selected based on individual applications endorsed by the leading officials of their parties.

Working language: English

Pre-requisites:

- **Strong written and oral English proficiency**
- University/college degree (or at least four successfully completed semesters at university / college by the start of the first course)

II: Structure of the series

1. **European Values and Democratic Principles** (23 - 28 November 2026), on site, in Budapest, Hungary
2. **Economic and Social Challenges in Europe** (25 - 30 January 2027), on site, in Budapest, Hungary
3. **International Relations and Global Issues** (22 - 26 February 2027), on site, in Vienna, Austria

Note: The participants are required to arrive one day before and depart ONLY after the closing of the courses. The organizers reserve the right to change the locations, venue, content, and format of the series.

Proposed topics (to be finalised also based on selected participants' expectations):

European Values and Democratic Principles

1. Democratic Principles and Governance
2. Introduction to the EPP family, and Christian Democratic values and principles
3. Value-based decision-making, Christian Democratic values in concrete policymaking
4. Ethical leadership and Integrity
5. Identity politics: the importance of Individual rights and freedoms vs group identities
6. The role of civil society, cooperation between parties and NGOs
7. International norms for human rights and minority protection
8. Environment and Christian Democracy: Community, Subsidiarity and Ethical responsibilities
9. Politico-media complex, free press, and politicians' expectations
10. Social media and freedom of speech
11. Effective communication and public speaking: the art of persuasion and the power of words
12. Community Engagement and mobilization: Social media and polarization

Economic and Social Challenges in Europe

1. Building and Maintaining a Political Base: Strategies for engaging and expanding a political support base and a smart use of social media
2. Globalisation and its impact on everyday policymaking (Eastern and Western economic systems, monopoly and decentralisation, national ownership and FDI, future tendencies)
3. Nation-states and international financial organizations, banking and finance in transitional countries, EU funds
4. Taxation and wealth distribution
5. Regional and local economic policy, competitiveness issues
6. Social dialogue, labour relations, retirement systems and employment
7. Climate change and economic policy
8. Healthcare systems and accessibility in transition countries
9. Family and welfare policy
10. Innovation and technology in governance
11. Immigration: Social and economic impact
12. The future of work: Will everyone benefit from technological progress and Innovation?
13. Financial literacy and budget management

International Relations and Global Issues

- 1 Fortifying democracy worldwide
- 2 Crisis Management and Leadership: leading during crises and decision-making under pressure
- 3 Multilateral solutions to current international challenges
- 4 Cyber Warfare and Global Stability
- 5 The Role of International Organizations in Conflict Resolution (United Nations, OSCE)
- 6 Artificial Intelligence and Global Ethics
- 7 Cooperation with the EU, current agenda and key challenges
- 8 Global challenges in a multipolar world
- 9 Energy impact on the state of global affairs and international security
- 10 Demography and migration as security factors
- 11 Global trade wars and economic stability
- 12 Nuclear proliferation and disarmament

Skill training and personal development (all courses)

1. Team building
2. Communication and presentation skills
3. Decision-making training
4. Debating skills
5. Advocacy training
6. Leadership and management
7. Personal branding and digital presence
8. Psychological resilience and emotional intelligence
9. Coalition building and negotiation skills

III. Application process

Application Form must be filled before the indicated deadline

The followings need to be uploaded to the application form:

- **A 1-2 min video assignment on the topic:**
Imagine you are leading your country during a crisis. How would Christian Democratic / centre-right principles guide your policy response? Highlight one specific decision and its impact.
- **letter of reference**, signed and with official letterhead (and translated to English when necessary), from the delegating party (signed by the International Secretary), or NGO (signed by the legal representative)
- **Copy of diploma or a certificate** issued by university/college (with English translation that can be produced by the applicant too) verifying that by the start of the course the applicant successfully completed at least two semesters at university / college
- **Passport copy** (just the main page with relevant personal data and validity)

IV. Conditions of admission

- Preparation of all assignments before / during courses in compliance with the set deadlines
- **Active and full participation in all courses**

We will consider complete application packages only.

Deadline for applications:

October 26 (Monday) 2026, EOD

Organiser contacts:

Robert Schuman Institute

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HUNGARY

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Contact person:

All communication should be addressed to the Robert Schuman Institute.

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Financial arrangements:

The costs of the course, including lectures, trainings as well as costs of full-board and lodging in double rooms will be covered by the organisers.

Participants should have their travel costs be paid by their delegating party, or by themselves. The RSI may be able to contribute to partially cover for travel costs ONLY following an official request from the delegating organisation (included in the reference letter and attached to the application form). If RSI gives any international travel cost contribution or reimbursement, it must be previously requested and agreed. Local transportation in Budapest and Vienna, and in the country of origin as well as health insurance is to be covered by participants. Participants arriving from Lebanon and Morocco will get a refund (after arrival) of their visa fee. Participants in need of visa are invited to submit their applications as soon as possible, preferably by the 5th October 2026.

Attendance at each course of the series is mandatory from the first to the last day of the event as this is essential to efficient teamwork and to accomplish the aims of the series.

Should you require any further information about the study visit, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Gábor BERCZELI
Director

on behalf of **Reinhold LOPATKA MEP**, RSI President