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## DEMOCRATIC LITERACY AND THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

4<sup>th</sup> International Student Forum on Future Democracy in  
Eisenach/Thuringia (Germany) from 12-18 October 2026

<b>Where?</b>	Eisenach, Thuringia (Germany)
<b>What?</b>	Workshops, projects, and discussions: one week of intensive collaboration and shared learning within a group of 25 students from around the world
<b>When?</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> October 2026 (Monday-Sunday)
<b>Any Costs?</b>	Travel costs, accommodation and daily meals will be covered
<b>Who can apply?</b>	International students from European universities (including students from non-European countries currently staying in Europe) <sup>1</sup>
<b>Application Deadline</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2026



Participants working on the Wartburg Declaration 2025. (M. Cunetchi / GEDG)

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<sup>1</sup> Applications from students at non-European universities will also be considered; however, please note that travel support is limited and may only cover part of the costs for participants who are travelling to Eisenach from outside of Europe.



## **What is the Student Forum on Future Democracy?**

The Student Forum on Future Democracy takes place annually in Eisenach. It aims to foster international dialogue among young people and encourage democratic participation. The week-long forum includes thematic workshops with experts, open working sessions, and free time to get to know one another as well as the city and its surroundings. In 2026, the forum will be held for the fourth time. This year's thematic focus will be Democratic Literacy.

## **Topic 2026: Democratic Literacy**

Democratic systems rely on informed citizens who can understand and interact with the complex political environment they live in. However, formal knowledge of political systems alone does not prepare young people for the challenges they face today. This gap between knowledge and action can weaken participation between elections, even among those who consider themselves well-informed.

The *Student Forum on Future Democracy* places the issue of democratic literacy at the center of discussion:

What does democratic literacy mean in theory as well as in practice and how is it influenced by its political context?

What skills and competencies do citizens need for democracy to function?

How can democratic literacy be supported on both a national and international level?

## **Programme**

The programme will include several expert-led academic workshops as well as student-led workshops to discuss your own questions and topics concerning the future of democracy. The schedule furthermore includes a dedicated writing phase for the Wartburg Declaration 2026, an excursion to Wartburg Castle as well as the chance to present your Declaration in the castle's ceremonial hall.



## **Who is the SNFD?**

The Student Network on Future Democracy (SNFD) is an international, student-led initiative that grew out of the first Student Forum in 2023. It brings together students committed to democracy, elections, and civic engagement through media, dialogue, and international collaboration.

SNFD is a space for continued exchange between the yearly forums and beyond them, where members organize and participate in democracy-related events across different countries, co-create social media and journalism projects, and gain hands-on experience in democratic action and transnational cooperation. It offers a dynamic platform for students to actively shape the future of democracy year-round.



Presentation of the Wartburg Declaration 2025 at Wartburg Castle. (C. Faludi / GEDG)

## **Why Eisenach?**

On 18<sup>th</sup> October 1817, around 500 students gathered at Wartburg Castle in Eisenach to advocate for democratic rights. This historical event, known as the Wartburg Festival, marks an important yet ambivalent chapter in German history. With the Student Forum, we aim to reconnect with its democratic legacy and take a transnational perspective on democracy today.



## **Application**

Are you currently studying at a European university, either full-time or as an exchange student?

Are you passionate about the future of democratic societies and curious to explore how to promote democratic literacy across different countries?

Are you eager to engage in respectful, thought-provoking discussions and become part of a dynamic network of politically engaged students?

If so, send the following application documents (preferably as one PDF-file) to [student-forum@gedg.org](mailto:student-forum@gedg.org):

- Short CV
- Letter of Motivation (one page, including an outline of your interest in the topic of democratic literacy as well as the description of an occasion or a moment in which you have experienced and/or learned something about democracy)

**Application deadline:** 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

If you are concerned about potential risks to your personal safety caused by your attendance of the Student Forum on Future Democracy or would like to attend anonymously, please do not hesitate to contact us to find a solution.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Take a look at the Wartburg-Declaration 2025 [here](#).

Get some more impressions from last year's forum on [YouTube](#).

*The Student Forum on Future Democracy is a project of the Society for the Study of the History of Democracy (GEDG), in cooperation with the city of Eisenach, the Wartburg Foundation Eisenach, and the Student Network on Future Democracy (SNFD).*