



## Innovative Thinking Labs 2026

We are seeking expressions of interest for Rovers and/or Scouters who wish to represent Scouting Ireland at Innovative Thinking Labs in early 2026.

The Innovative Thinking Lab series is a participatory, design-based training format that empowers youth leaders to collaboratively explore complex societal challenges. The series has two Labs, “Youth Movements in Times of Political Polarisation” and “Fake news, digital and media literacy”.

Organised as a joint Voices of Change project initiative between World Scouting (WOSM) and the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, the Labs will bring together passionate youth and experts from across Europe to explore political polarisation, the role of digital media in shaping today’s information landscape, strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration, and design real-world initiatives relevant to young people.

### Aim/Objectives

Thinking Lab 1 “Youth Movements in Times of Political Polarisation”

This Lab explores how youth organisations navigate the tensions between political neutrality, activism, and value-based engagement in increasingly polarised societies. Through dialogue, peer exchange, and design thinking, participants will reflect on what it means to be “a-political,” analyse how their movements respond to societal and global conflicts, and co-create tools for responsible positioning and communication. The Lab provides a safe and reflective space for unpacking contested narratives, examining internal and external pressures, and strengthening the capacity of youth leaders to act with integrity and unity in divided contexts.

Through this event, participants will:

- Explore values, identities, and organisational positioning in complex or polarised environments.
- Deepen understanding of political polarisation and its impact on youth organisations.
- Strengthen critical thinking, reflection, and ethical reasoning in addressing complex social issues.
- Participate in a collective development process through peer exchange and cross-contextual learning.
- Learn from external experts and engage in dialogue to bridge the gap between theory and practice.
- Strengthen partnerships between youth movements, experts, and communities.



## Thinking Lab 2 “Fake news, digital and media literacy”

Participants of this lab will explore how digital media shapes understanding, participation, and trust in today’s information landscape. Participants will examine how information is produced, shared, and verified, and how youth movements can foster critical thinking and media awareness among their members.

Through the Innovative Thinking Lab in France, participants will:

- Reflect on complex societal challenges through dialogue and peer learning.
- Gain insights from experts and diverse youth experiences.
- Use design thinking to co-create practical tools and solutions.
- Strengthen critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity.
- Build shared approaches that foster inclusion and democratic engagement.

### Dates and Venue

The two Innovative Thinking Labs will take place in early 2026.

Thinking Lab 1 “Youth Movements in Times of Political Polarisation”, will take place in Romania from February 11 to 15, 2026.

Thinking Lab 2 “Fake news, digital and media literacy”, will be hosted in France from March 26 to 30, 2026.

### Participants’ Profile

Scouting Ireland will be applying to send one participant to each Thinking Lab.

Applicants are required to:

- Be a registered member of Scouting Ireland
- Be aged between 18 – 30 years at the time of the event
- Be available to attend for the full event (four days).
- Be willing to share personal experiences and best practices and engage in discussions with participants from different countries.
- Commit to contributing to the work on Peace Education within the International Team.

### Application Process

Applications will be accepted through the current open call. Depending on the applications received, an interview panel may be convened.

Closing date for submissions is the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2025.

You can apply at this link: [Innovative Thinking Open Call](#)