

## Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission  
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



# COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH POLICY IN “THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA”



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# 1. Context and principles of national youth policy

## 1.1 Context of national youth policy

As it is the case with most of the ex-communist countries and especially the countries of ex-Yugoslavia, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” had to recompose the youth policy according to the new time and new needs. Old structures supported by the state and directly influenced by the communist party disappeared and only several organizations that had a leading role in supporting the youth policy and delivering youth work in the field survived this transition and continue to work (Red Cross, Scouts, Theatre Youth, Music Youth...). The process of transition within the society was very slow and this has also affected development of a national youth policy. Real efforts for establishing a national youth policy happened with the beginning of the 21st century, when the process of establishing a National Youth Strategy started. It is important to stress that parallel to the processes of EU accession, the interest and enthusiasm for development of youth policy grew. As part of the activities within one of the biggest projects financed by the World Bank (Babylon youth centers) in 2002, a big survey took place: A baseline study on youth trends prepared and conducted by a team of researchers from the Philosophy Faculty – Institute for Sociology (led by Dr. Antoanela Petkovska). On the basis of this study, a wide consultative process started, where the main stakeholders were involved in the process of drafting the National Youth Strategy. After more than a year, a draft document was submitted to the government for adoption. The process of adoption took almost a year and finally, at the end of 2005, the National Youth Strategy was adopted by the government. Unfortunately, the strategy as such was not effective without action plans. It took 3 more years to start a process of preparation and adoption of an action plan. A National Steering Committee for implementation of the National Youth Strategy that consisted both of government and youth NGOs was established. The Committee developed an action plan proposal for 2009. The idea was that there would be action plan for each year. Unfortunately, the action plan for 2009 was not fulfilled completely, mainly because of the financial crisis in the country.

In 2015, the Agency of Youth and Sport supported by the UNDP started a process of evaluation of the strategy 2005-2015 and preparation of a new one for the period 2016-2025. In the process (via open discussions, workshops, online contributions etc.) all stakeholders were included: state institutions, youth NGOs, local youth councils and hundreds of young individuals. The basis for starting the drafting process was a study on Youth Trends in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, prepared at the end of 2014 by an experts’ team from the Institute for Sociological Studies. On 3rd of February 2016 Strategy was adopted by the government. In 2011, a Law for Youth was prepared as part of the National Strategy for Adoption of the EU legislation, but after wide consultations and many discussions with a lot of critics, the version of the law that was put in

parliamentarian procedure was withdrawn by the Government and since then, there are no clear deadlines or information on what will happen with this law.

## **1.2. Principles of national youth policy**

According to Macedonian society, former historical, social, political and ethical practice, and in the absence of internationally recognised definition, the term youth as used in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” signifies a separate social category of population aged between 15 and 24 that is particularly vulnerable to socio-economic changes and which represents, due to its critical thought and the urge for changes and future progress of the society, a basic development resource. In light of the consequences of the socio-economic crisis in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, which has been thwarting the process of development of active and responsible individuals (prolonged time of education, inability to find a job, inability to create a family, economic dependence on parents or absence of economic and thus, personal independence), any serious youth action or program should also take into account the persons aged 24 to 30, with the aim of mitigating or eliminating the obstacles to their development as individuals and responsible citizens of the Macedonian society<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> National Youth Strategy (2006)

## 2. Statistics on young people

Age	All	Man	Woman
Total	2067 471	1035 680	1 031 791
0	23 141	12 012	11 129
1 - 4	93 066	48 301	44 765
5 - 9	112 521	57 984	54 537
10 - 14	119 305	61 588	57 717
15 - 19	134 423	69 396	65 027
20 - 24	154 815	79 485	75 330
25 - 29	163 634	83 782	79 852
30 - 34	162 911	83 652	79 259
35 - 39	154 341	78 942	75 399
<b>40 - 44</b>	<b>146 481</b>	<b>74 039</b>	<b>72 442</b>
45 - 49	147 087	74 324	72 763
50 - 54	142 045	71 605	70 440
55 -59	135 359	68 001	67 358
60 - 64	119 259	57 684	61 575
65 - 69	90 220	41 886	48 334
70 - 74	70 187	31 778	38 409
75 - 79	53 353	23 153	30 200
80 - 84	30 986	12 684	18 302
85 +	14 003	5 326	8 677

According to the latest statistics of 30/06/2014 485736 people are between the ages 15-30, making 23.5% of the total population.

Sources of data on population and households are the Censuses which were carried out in 1921, 1931, 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 1994 and 2002 according to unified methodologies and forms for all Census areas. Estimated mid-year population figures are based on Census results and data on natural population increase, and since 2002 the estimations include the data on mechanical increase. [www.stat.gov.mk](http://www.stat.gov.mk)

### **3. Actors and Structures**

#### **3.1 Public authorities**

##### **3.1.1 National public authorities:**

Agency of Youth and Sport

Str. Macedonia 38

1000 Skopje

“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

[www.ams.gov.mk](http://www.ams.gov.mk)

The main government body in charge of youth is the Agency of Youth and Sport (hereinafter AfYS), a government body with its own budget and responsibilities. Although it is not at a ministry level, it is an independent institution that is not under any other particular governmental ministry and responds directly to the Prime Minister. It is important to mention that from 1998 to 2000 the Agency was functioning as an independent Ministry but with the process of cutting the ministries, it was transformed into an Agency. Although several years ago there were also some initiatives to be under some of the existing ministries (Ministry of Education) AfYS continued to work as independent structure. The Agency for Youth and Sport has five departments: Department of Sport, Department of Capital investments, Department of Organization and Logistics, Department of Financial Issues and Department of Youth.

The main tasks of the Department of Youth are:

- social development and social integration of youth via quality formal and non-formal education;
- Economic prosperity of youth via youth entrepreneurship;
- improving quality of life;
- active participation of youth in public life and in decision-making processes at local and national level.

Youth Department is divided into two sub-departments: (1) International Cooperation and (2) Youth Policy and Training.

At the moment six people are employed in the Youth Department

Director responsible of Youth Sector by the Agency is Mrs. Gordana Cekova - email: [gordanacekova@yahoo.com](mailto:gordanacekova@yahoo.com).

Other national public bodies who are directly involved in youth policies

Partially, in scope of their activities and jurisdiction the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Social Care and the Ministry of Culture also have activities connected with youth.

[www.vlada.mk](http://www.vlada.mk)

[www.mon.gov.mk](http://www.mon.gov.mk)

[www.mtsp.gov.mk](http://www.mtsp.gov.mk)

[www.kultura.gov.mk](http://www.kultura.gov.mk)

It is important to stress the role of the National Agency for Youth Educational Programs and Mobility that is in charge of the European Commission programmes. Besides the problems that have occurred in the pilot phase (activities were suspended for a certain period and the Agency was under investigation by Brussels), from 2012 the Agency continued the activities and currently “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” is a full program country of Erasmus +.

[www.na.org.mk](http://www.na.org.mk)

### **3.1.2 Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field**

Not applicable

### **3.1.3 Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field**

In “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” there are 85 municipalities and most of them have a certain focus on youth, supporting youth activities mainly youth information centers.

The municipality of Skopje, the capital, has a structure within the city administration that provides support to NGOs, including Youth NGOs. There is a city Co-ordination Council of NGOs.

At the moment, there is still an on-going process of establishing Councils of Youth, as independent counselling bodies within the municipal councils. Structures have already been established in around 60 municipalities out of 85.

## **3.2 Youth welfare services (comprising public and/or non public actors)**

Not applicable

## **3.3 Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field**

### **3.3.1 Youth Councils**

The non-governmental umbrella organization Youth Council of Macedonia (YCM) that came out in 1990 from the Union of Socialist Youth has gathered 12 national youth associations and, by 2003, it had only a membership of six associations. Since 2001, YCM has not had any major activity, and

it was not represented in international youth organisations and not active at all. Although it was never formally announced in practice the Youth Council stopped to exist.

For many years the only relevant youth umbrella organisation was SEGA coalition. It was involved in the process of drafting the first National Youth Strategy, preparation of the Action Plan and had a leading role in the initiative for the preparation of the Law on Youth.

SEGA

Ivo Lola Ribar, 5

Prilep 7500

Macedonia

[www.sega.org.mk](http://www.sega.org.mk)

In June 2013 an umbrella of youth organisations called National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM) was established by 55 founding organisations. At the moment NYCM gathers 60 organisations: 23 youth organisations, 18 organisations for youth, 2 national youth union organisations, 10 youth wings of political parties and 7 associate member organisations. NYCM is not formally recognised by the state as the only umbrella youth organisation that represents Macedonian youth. It is obvious that there are relevant organisations not part of NYCM, but at the moment NYCM has respected organisations as their members. Although formally unrecognised NYCM is very active at the national level and it was actively involved in the process of drafting the National Youth Strategy. It also has very good co-operation with international organisations especially with the European Youth Forum who actively supported the establishment and work of NYCM.

### **3.3.2 Youth NGOs**

Nowadays, the youth sector in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” is a combination of associations such as: youth organisations, organisations of different fields with youth as a target group, student associations and student unions, youth wings of political parties, and cultural and artistic youth associations.

In the Research on youth trends in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (March-November 2010), 103 organisations were mapped as relevant but only 53 filled the questionnaire and participated. More relevant information about their capacities, target groups, needs, budget etc. can be found on the SEGA website, which conducted the survey.

[www.sega.org.mk](http://www.sega.org.mk)



**3.4 National network(s) for knowledge on youth linking all actors in the field (policy makers, researchers, young people and their organisations, NGOs)?**

## **4. Legislation**

The National Youth Strategy (NYS) aims to improve the general position and satisfy the needs and interests of the young people in the country and, as the only specialised legislative youth document, was adopted by the Government in February 2016. It will last until 2025. It is divided into nine thematic areas:

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

YOUTH INFORMATION

LOCAL YOUTH WORK

EDUCATION

EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT PRIOR TO EMPLOYMENT

CULTURE

SPORT

HEALTH

LIFE QUALITY

After the adoption of the strategy Action plan for its implementation 2016-2017 was prepared. It covers all the nine priorities with results, measures, time frame, institutions responsible for implementation and budget. In most of the cases budget should be planned by responsible institutions. In some cases there are already finances available for implementation of the activities of the action plan.

## **5. National Policy Programmes on youth**

Beside the NYS, programmes in other policy areas also tackle youth, such as the National Programme for the Development of the Education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015, National Programme for Employment, and National Programme for Culture...

The Ministry of Labour and Social Care adopted a first Action Plan for Youth Employment. Target group are 135000 young people aged 15-29. Duration of the action plan is 2012-2015 and 27 million euro were allocated for the implementation of the plan. In the meantime, other actions and projects are carried out in the field of unemployment. In 2014 Ministry of Labor and Social Policy initiated info meetings for the young unemployed persons. More than 11000 people attended these information meetings. In 2016 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy started with implementation of the project Macedonia employs, with an aim of employing 19000 persons. One of the five target groups of the project are people under 35. By the end of the year there will be data how many young people were employed under the frame of this project.

<http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/?ItemID=BC37564335D9E14D92E0A976F034DD50>

## **6. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth**

### National level

Agency of Youth and Sport within its budget of Youth Department finances projects, campaigns, activities. The budget for youth is small and symbolic.

There is also a possibility for some of the activities of the youth NGOs to be financed by the grants organized through the system of open competition/ announced public call given by the Department for Co-operation with NGOs within the Secretariat of the Government. It has a general NGO support budget. There is no data available on how many youth NGOs applied and if some of them were successful, nor and what was the total amount received.

### Regional level

In practice, there is no system for financial supporting of youth activities at local level, although in some of the municipalities there is a symbolic budget for granting resources to the civil sector each year. There is no data available of how many youth NGOs applied and what was the total amount received at the local level.

## **7. European Dimension of youth policy**

### **7.1 Council of Europe.**

The Agency of Youth and Sport disseminates the information of Council of Europe programs in the field of youth to relevant organisations and participates in its structures (CDEJ). Youth organisations are active on the Advisory Council on Youth. The Agency of Youth and Sport was the national co-ordinator for Council of Europe No Hate Speech Campaign.

In “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, there is also a programme office of the Council of Europe.

“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” is also represented in the Network of European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy correspondents and participates in EU-CoE youth partnership activities.

### **7.2 European Union.**

For many years, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” was a partner country in the previous Youth and Youth in Action Programmes of the European Commission. Relatively recently, in 2013, following the establishment of the National Agency for Youth Educational Programs and Mobility, responsible for implementation of Erasmus +, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” become a full program country. EU programmes had and still have great impact for Macedonian youth NGOs who use it very successfully. Dozens of projects are taking place in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and an important number of Macedonian youth went abroad and participated in activities taking place abroad.

[www.na.org.mk](http://www.na.org.mk)

## **8. Further sources of information on youth policy in [Country]**

Study: Youth trends in the Republic of Macedonia, Experts team from the Institute of Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, 2014.

In March 2016 Agency of youth and sport launched a call for an organization responsible for editing Macedonia part of Youth Wiki. After the end of the formal selection soon there will be Macedonian part of Youth Wiki prepared.

### References

National Youth Strategy (2006)

Study: Youth trends in the Republic of Macedonia, Experts team from the Institute of Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, 2014.

National Youth Strategy (2016-2025)

Action plan for implementation of the NYS 2016-2017