

Youth Partnership

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



CONTRIBUTION OF NON-PROGRAMME COUNTRIES TO EU YOUTH WIKI

CHAPTER I: BELARUS YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

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At the proposal of the European Commission, the EU-CoE youth partnership network of country correspondents in the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYP) is contributing to the EU Youth Wiki with knowledge and information on a number of Erasmus+ non-programme countries from South-East Europe and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The contributors use the guidelines of the EU Youth Wiki when drafting their country contributions, but due to limited resources and support, present lighter versions of the required information. This chapter is part of piloting the EU Youth Wiki contributions for Belarus.

1.1. TARGET POPULATION OF YOUTH POLICY

In accordance with Article 1 of the [Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 65-Z of 7 December 2009 “On the Foundations of State Youth Policy”](#) young citizens are defined as nationals of the Republic of Belarus, foreign nationals or stateless persons permanently residing in the Republic of Belarus aged between 14 and 31. Moreover, the above-mentioned law defines a young family as a family in which both or one of the spouses (in a single-parent family) are under the age of 31.

As of 1 January 2017, the number and percentage of young people in the total population aged from 14 to 31 amounts to 1 992 512 or 20.96% of the overall population of Belarus. The male population amounts to 1 022 212 (51.3%); the female population amounts to 970 300 (48.7%).¹ As a rule, for statistical purposes young people are divided into three sub-groups: aged 15-19 years, aged 20-24, and aged 25-29. The most numerous youth age group is young people aged 25-30 with a total of 737 917 people.²

According to the [Constitution of the Republic of Belarus of 1994](#), citizens of the Republic of Belarus who have reached the age of 18 shall be eligible to vote (Article 64).

The [Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus of 9 July 1999 No. 275-Z](#) defines under Article 27 the age for criminal liability as 16 years at the time of committing a crime, with the exception of cases provided for by the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus for persons between the age of 14 and 16 years.

1.2. NATIONAL YOUTH LAW

The Republic of Belarus has well-developed legal and regulatory frameworks covering all spheres of young people's lives. The [Constitution of the Republic of Belarus](#) guarantees young people the right to their spiritual, moral and physical development. The state creates the necessary conditions for free and effective participation of young people in political, social, economic and cultural development (Article 32).

Youth policy is the policy aimed at addressing the relevant issues of young people, which is implemented by state, regional and local authorities as well as youth organisations and other civil society structures. The fundamental document in the field of state youth policy is the

¹ The age and sex structure of the population of the Republic of Belarus as of 1 January 2017 and the average annual population for 2016. Statistical bulletin, National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, www.belstat.gov.by/upload/iblock/f7c/f7cc9f91d4c0940c5fa163da65740a0a.zip.

² Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 65-Z of 7 December 2009 “On the Foundations of State Youth Policy”](#). The law is the general framework of state youth policy as an important component of state policy regarding the social, economic and cultural development of the Republic of Belarus. The law consists of five chapters.

– Chapter 1. Basic provisions: this chapter defines the basic terms, sets out objectives and subjects of the state youth policy, and regulates the development and implementation of the republican and regional programmes in the field of state youth policy. In particular, the state youth policy is defined as the system of social, economic, political, organisational, legal and other activities aimed at supporting young citizens (hereinafter, if otherwise not defined in the law, referred to as “youth”) and undertaken by the state to ensure social formation and development of the youth, and ultimate implementation of their potential for the sake of society as a whole (Article 1).

The objectives of the state youth policy are the following: comprehensive upbringing of young people; contribution to ethical, moral and physical development; creation of conditions for free and effective participation of young people in the political, social, economic and cultural development of our society; social, financial, legal and other types of support for young people; youth empowerment in the choice of way of life (Article 3).

The subjects of the state youth policy, in accordance with the law, are the following: youth; young families; youth associations; state bodies and other organisations, participating within their competence in the implementation of the state youth policy (Article 5).

– Chapter 2. State regulation and management in the sphere of the state youth policy: the chapter sets out the mechanism of state regulation and management in the sphere of state youth policy. The articles of the chapter regulate the authority of the President of the Republic of Belarus; the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus; the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the field of state youth policy; regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field.

– Chapter 3. The main directions of the state youth policy: this chapter defines the directions of its implementation. These directions are as follows: citizenship and patriotic education of young people; promotion of healthy lifestyle; state support to young families; assistance in exercising young people’s right to work; state support for gifted and talented youth; assistance in exercising young people’s right to association; support of development and implementation of socially significant youth initiatives; international youth co-operation.

– Chapter 4. Financing and guarantees of the implementation of the state youth policy: this chapter defines general sources of state youth policy financing; defines responsibility for its information and academic support; determines the procedure of youth participation in decision-making processes and youth policy implementation; provides the basis for community youth centre development.

– Chapter 5. Final provisions: this chapter defines measures for the implementation of the law.

In October 2016 updates were made to the state youth policy in the Republic of Belarus. In particular, the [Law On Making Amendments and Agenda to the Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 65-Z of 7 December 2009 “On Foundations of State Youth Policy”](#) was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus. The new concepts/definitions, like mentorship and youth personnel policy, were included in the law. Among other novelties this

law encourages a public authority to establish advisory councils in the field of state youth policy and widely co-operates with youth non-governmental organisations (youth NGOs).

The Republic of Belarus provides comprehensive support for non-governmental youth associations. It is based on the [Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 305-Z of 9 November 1999 “On State Support to Youth and Children’s Public Associations in the Republic of Belarus”](#). The law defines guarantees, general principles, contents and measures of state support for youth and children’s public associations, associations (unions) of youth and (or) children’s associations in the Republic of Belarus at the national and local levels as well as the amount of targeted financing from the republican and local budgets and state extra-budgetary funds of the Republic of Belarus allocated for these purposes (Article 1).

The National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus adopted the [Code of Education of the Republic of Belarus No. 243-Z of 13 January 2011](#) (CERB) regulating youth policy implementation in educational establishments. *Inter alia*, the CERB meets the needs, rights and guarantees for students and schoolchildren as well as distinguishing measures of social support and protection for them. Student self-governance bodies, student union committees, social and psychological services and departments for youth affairs activities are regulated by local law.

Non-formal youth work in educational establishments is based on the [Resolution of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus No. 82 of 15 June 2015 “On the Concept of Continuing Education of Children and Student Youth”](#) (CECSY). The CECSY establishes the following priorities for upbringing in educational establishments: consistent and active support to youth citizenship and patriotism education in Belarus, a professional worker, a responsible family man (Article 1). For the purpose of implementing the CECSY the [Action Plan for 2016-2020](#) has been adopted.

Special attention is paid to the labour rights of young people in the Belarusian legislation. The labour relationships are regulated by [Labour Code of the Republic of Belarus No. 296-Z of 26 July 1999](#) (LCRB). The LCRB defines specificity of youth labour (Chapter 20). Articles 272-282 of the law set out age restrictions and protect the rights of minors, impose restrictions on work for youth under the age of 18, and guarantee them a certain level of wages. In accordance with the law, graduates of educational establishments and some categories of youth are provided with their first working place. Some benefits for young specialists are provided by the [Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 273 of 14 June 2007 “On Pay Increase to Individual Categories of Young Specialists”](#).

In the Republic of Belarus there is a widely supported movement of student work teams for the purpose of implementation of the state youth policy in the Republic of Belarus as well as provision of temporary employment opportunities for youth in their free time. The Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 181 of 16 April 2012 “On Organisation of the Activities of Student Work Teams on the Territory of the Republic of Belarus” and the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 958 as of 23 June 2010 “On Approval of the Regulations on the Procedure of Organising and Financing the Temporary Employment for the Youth Studying in Education Institutions at Extracurricular Time” have been passed.

Talented and gifted students enjoy particular support from the Special Fund of the President of the Republic of Belarus for the Social Support of Gifted Students and the Special Fund of

the President of the Republic of Belarus for the Support of Talented Youth. A number of support measures for talented and gifted young people are guaranteed by the [Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 18 of 12 January 1996 “On Special Fund of the President of the Republic of Belarus for Support of Talented Youth”](#), the [Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 19 of 12 January 1996 “On Special Fund of the President of Republic of Belarus for Social Support of Gifted Pupils and Students”](#) and the [Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 199 of 26 April 2010 “On Some Issues of Developing, Record-Keeping and Using the Databank of Gifted and Talented Youth”](#).

The most important documents regarding international youth co-operation are as follows: the Decision of the Council of the Heads of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States as of 10 December 2010, “On the Strategy of International Youth Co-operation between the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States till 2020”; the Agreement signed by the CIS Member States on Co-operation in the Field of Youth (adopted on 6 November 2005 at the Meeting of the Council of Heads of the CIS Member States held in Moscow).

1.3. NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY

The strategic priorities of the youth policy in the Republic of Belarus are the integral part of the [National Strategy for the Sustainable Social and Economic Development of Belarus for the period till 2030](#) (adopted on 10 February 2015 at the meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers). According to the document, youth is acknowledged as one of the most proactive actors of civil society. The youth policy is aimed at young citizens’ capacity building, creating considerable conditions for their self-organisation, promoting active and effective growth and participation in civil society life. According to the document, the strategic objectives of the state youth policy are the following:

- to strengthen patriotic upbringing of young citizens, to create a sense of responsibility for the country’s future, to actively involve them in the development and implementation of the country’s development programmes;
- to improve state support for talented and gifted youth, to create conditions for attracting talented young people from abroad;
- to intensify the labour activity of youth, to strengthen the vocational guidance and competitiveness of young people in the labour market;
- to provide support for significant youth initiatives and projects, corresponding to the main directions of social and economic development of Belarus;
- to create conditions for increasing the educational and the cultural level of young people;
- to expand opportunities for volunteerism;
- to ensure active participation for children and youth in social and political life and decision-making processes;
- to promote the initiative “City, friendly to children”;
- to ensure the rights of children and youth with special needs in their psychological and physical development;
- to engage talented youth in management, science, economics, entrepreneurship more widely.³

³ National Strategy for the Sustainable Social and Economic Development of Belarus for the period till 2030, p. 143.

The [National Social and Economic Development Programme for 2016-2020](#) (NSEDP 2016-2020) was adopted on 15 December 2016 by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 466. For the first time, the “development of the potential of youth and its active involvement in the creation of an economy of knowledge (Youth)” was indicated as one of the five key priorities of the NSEDP 2016-2020.⁴ The main objective of the Belarusian state in the sphere of youth policy is to create all conditions for the full-fledged formation of young citizens of the Republic of Belarus. The main priorities underlined by the NSEDP 2016-2020 are the following: successful transition from childhood to adulthood; fostering family values and a healthy lifestyle; acquisition of contemporary professional knowledge; entrepreneurship; support for talented and gifted youth; promotion of youth leadership, youth engagement in fundamental and applied research and innovative activities.

The shaping of respect among young people for the Belarusian state and society will be facilitated by further development of youth self-government (youth councils, youth parliaments, etc.), volunteer and student teams’ movements.

The [“Youth Policy” sub-programme within the “Education and Youth Policy” state programme for 2016-2020](#) (EYP 2016-2020) is a guiding document for youth policy implementation in Belarus. It was adopted by the Resolution of Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus on 28 March 2016 No. 250. The sub-programme’s objectives are the following:

- to form active citizenship and patriotism in young people, involve them in public activities;
- to take additional actions to help young people form a positive attitude towards traditional family values and responsible parenthood, sensible attitude to health, prevention of negative phenomena in youth;
- to increase efficiency of career promotion and choice as well as employment of young people in extracurricular time (time out of their primary workplace), to support entrepreneurship initiatives; to develop volunteering and student work team movement;
- to support socially significant and public initiatives of young people, school and university student self-governance bodies, to encourage children’s and youth public associations’ activities.

It is expected that by 2020 the following performance indicators in the sphere of youth policy will be improved: quality services proposed in the field of state youth policy; quantitative and qualitative indicators of youth participation in activities of child-focused and youth NGOs, implementation of innovative forms and methods of youth participation; efficiency in youth participation and co-operation in decision-making processes; conditions for self-development and self-realisation of youth; engagement of young people in innovative projects. Furthermore, it is expected to increase the efficiency of state youth policy funding at the expense of more effective co-ordination among all decision makers, stakeholders and youth NGOs.⁵

For the purpose of implementing the EYP 2016-2020 the Action Plan has been developed and passed. The Action Plan for the EYP 2016-2020 specifies titles of the activities, level of implementation (national and local) and terms of implementation by years and sources of financing. Within the framework of the Action Plan, four objectives were set out and 69 measures were identified.

⁴ National Social and Economic Development Programme for 2016-2020, p. 14.

⁵ Education and Youth Policy state programme for 2016-2020, p. 67.

– Objective 1, “Formation of active citizenship and patriotism among young people and their social inclusion” comprises a number of activities (forums, conferences, seminars, festivals, competitions, actions, projects, etc.) to be carried out. The most significant are the following: research and methodology literature, teachers’ experience, students’ art state exhibition; the republican contest “Youth capital of the Republic of Belarus”; the Youth Day in the framework of the International Festival of Arts “Slavianski Bazaar” in Vitebsk; activities to foster patriotic feelings and to promote active citizenship, including those dedicated to the Victory Day and the Independence Day of the Republic of Belarus (Republic Day); youth research.

– Objective 2, “Adoption of additional measures to promote positive attitude to traditional family values and responsible parenthood, health promotion, prevention of negative phenomena among young people” comprises activities devoted to strengthening young families and responsible parenthood as well as ethics and psychology of family relations; promotion of healthy lifestyle, support for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Conducting national and regional events and actions aimed at addressing smoking, alcohol and drug use issues among youth. In this respect, national and regional activities are carried out (projects, roundtables, conferences, training, competitions, talk shows, etc.). The number of activities is aimed at the development of youth creativity, sport and tourism, including the festivals such as “Student Spring” and “Star hike”.

– Objective 3, “Increase the effectiveness of work on vocational guidance and organisation of youth employment in free time, support youth in entrepreneurship, development of volunteer and student work teams” comprises the following: the number of vocational guidance activities (training, consultations, seminars, exhibitions, etc.); international, national and regional events and professional skills competitions among young workers, employees and students; activities for specialists working with youth and civil servants in charge of youth issues (forums, conferences, seminars, training); activities aimed at involving young people in innovative activities, increasing its entrepreneurial activity (start-up activities).

– Objective 4, “Support for socially significant initiatives of young people, student self-government; strengthening of children's and youth public associations activities”. The number of measures is planned to carry out activities in order to develop significant initiatives of youth; to provide comprehensive assistance to youth research and youth creativity; to support youth NGOs and youth movement. It is planned to hold international, national and regional competitions, youth camps, seminars, training for NGOs youth leaders and so on.

1.4. YOUTH POLICY DECISION MAKING

The youth policy issues at the national level are within the authority of the MoE. In accordance with the [Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 1049 of 4 August 2011 “Regulations on the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus”](#) the MoE is in charge of the implementation of state youth policy. The main functions of the MoE in the field of state youth policy are the following: co-ordinates the activities of state authority, organisations, individual entrepreneurs and all actors implementing state youth policy; oversees quality assurance in the field of the state youth policy; carries out the comprehensive analysis of state of affairs in the youth field and

predicts its trends; analyses contemporary trends in the youth field and determines directions of its development; co-operates with local executive and administrative bodies in decision-making processes on youth policy issues and child protection; provides organisational support and conducts fundamental and applied scientific research in the field of youth policy as well as implementation of research results in this field.

Involving young people in the formation and implementation of the state youth policy is one of the principles of the state youth policy.⁶ In this regard, under the MoE, two youth councils have been set up which directly participate in decision-making processes addressing youth issues.

Formally, the Republican Youth Council reviews proposals to improve legislation and shape normative legal frameworks for the youth policy in the Republic of Belarus, discusses relevant issues and problems of young people, develops recommendations aimed at increasing the efficiency of state youth policy decisions, and facilitates co-operation between various organisations and state structures working with the youth. The Council includes representatives of state authorities, public associations and unions, young teachers and scholars, researchers as well as pupils and students.⁷

The Public Republican Student Council includes representatives of all 51 higher education institutions of the country. The main objective of the Council is to provide support to competent specialists seeking efficient solutions to problems in the education system by creating necessary conditions for a broad public dialogue involving young people. Competencies of the Council include issues of student self-governance.⁸

At the level of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus youth policy issues are entrusted to the [Parliamentary Commission for Health, Physical Training, Family and Youth Policy](#). The scope of this Parliamentary Commission competency includes: marriage and family legislation, health legislation, youth policy issues, physical training and sports legislation, tourism legislation.

The regional structure of youth authorities consists of the Central Offices of Ideology, Culture and Youth Affairs in regional executive committees. The structure of regional and city executive committees includes offices (departments) of ideology, culture and youth affairs. Offices (departments) of ideology, culture and youth affairs in the executive committees implement the state youth policy, taking into account the features and characteristics of social and economic development of regions and cities as well as regulate, manage and control youth policy, and provide for financial and housing activities of subordinate institutions.⁹

The [Information and Analytical Centre under the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Belarus](#) has been implementing a project on the search, selection and training of young analysts for government bodies called [“Smart Networks”](#) since 1 October 2012. Under this

⁶ Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 65-Z of 7 December 2009 “On the Foundations of State Youth Policy”, Article 4.

⁷ Country Sheet Report – Belarus, European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy, published in 2016, <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9038134/Country+Sheet+Belarus-2016.pdf/b1bf1b76-b3c9-46e6-8c3d-3fd3b7f7eb58>, p. 13.

⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

project, young analysts from all over the country discuss topical issues of social and economic development and they are involved in decision-making processes.

Youth issues are publicly discussed through international and national forums, conferences and roundtables with the participation of all youth policy stakeholders and decision makers as well as youth leaders (including students) and youth NGO representatives. Public dialogue results are widely presented in the mass media. The biggest discussion platform on youth issues in Belarus is [“Open Dialogue. Youth of Belarus: Traditions and Future”](#), which has been taking place under the initiative of the BRSM Youth Union since 2014. At the present time, the significant dialogue platforms are the following: Republican Forums of Youth from Rural Areas, the Republican Forums of Youth Specialists, Forums of the Working Youth, and the [International Trade Union Youth Educational Forum “Temp-2017”](#).

1.5. CROSS-SECTORAL APPROACH WITH OTHER MINISTRIES

It is obvious that the implementation of the state youth policy requires close co-operation and co-ordination of all decision makers’ and stakeholders’ activities. Interdepartmental co-operation is an inseparable mechanism of the implementation of state youth policy in the Republic of Belarus. The EYP 2016-2020 defines the MoE as the main co-ordinator for this programme. Pursuant to the above-mentioned document, ministries taking part in implementation of the state youth policy within their competences are the following: [Ministry of Architecture and Construction](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Ministry of Health](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Ministry of Culture](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Sports and Tourism Ministry](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Defence Ministry](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Ministry of Communications and Informatisation](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Ministry of Agriculture and Food](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Ministry of Transport and Communications](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Ministry of Labour and Social Protection](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Ministry of Emergency Situations](#) of the Republic of Belarus, [Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Belarus](#), [Ministry of Energy](#) of the Republic of Belarus, and the [Ministry of Economy](#) of the Republic of Belarus. Furthermore, state committees, the [National Academy of Sciences of Belarus](#), [Higher Attestation Commission](#), [Academy of Public Administration under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Belarus](#), [Management Directorate of the President of the Republic of Belarus](#), Regional Executive Committees, and the [Minsk City Executive Committee](#) are identified as co-partners in the EYP 2016-2020 implementation as well. Co-partners within the EYP 2016-2020 are obliged to report on the state of affairs of the implementation to the MoE.

The Action Plan in the framework of the EYP 2016-2020 clarifies responsibilities of all stakeholders and co-partners (including youth NGOs) for each single activity.

An important direction of cross-sectoral co-operation among ministries is the mutual implementation of [Interdepartmental Action Plans](#). Nowadays, the MoE, in co-operation with relevant ministries and departments, is implementing the “Complex action plan against illicit drug trafficking and its consumption”, the “Complex action plan against spread of alcohol, drugs and psychotropic substances” et al.

It has to be mentioned that cross-sectoral co-operation in the youth field is carried out within the framework of bilateral agreements on co-operation between the MoE and interested partners. For example, the MoE and the Belarusian Orthodox Church adopted a [joint programme of co-operation for 2015-2020](#). Co-ordination of this co-operation is conducted by the Co-ordinating Council for Co-operation.

1.6. EVIDENCE-BASED YOUTH POLICY

The evidence-based principle in the Belarusian youth policy are described in the current legislation. As explicitly stated above, the MoE provides organisational support and conducts fundamental and applied scientific research in the field of youth policy and ensures implementation of its results.¹⁰ In this regard, the MoE co-operates with all organisations, institutions and researchers carrying out scientific research on youth-related topics as well as conducting ongoing monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of state youth policy. Actually, multilevel information, analytical and research networks in the field of youth and youth policy have been functioning for many years. Scientific research on youth is undertaken by national and international organisations such as the MoE, the National Institute for Higher Education, the **National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus**, the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Centre for Sociological and Political Studies of the Belarusian State University, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Belarus. All valid information, research results, and stakeholders' recommendations are taken into account during the elaboration of the legislative framework on youth issues and it is widely used in policy-making processes.

The MoE in co-operation with the National Institute for Higher Education, Youth Policy and Sociocultural Communication Department and other partners issue the National Report "On the situation of the youth in the Republic of Belarus"¹¹ annually. The mission of the report is to inform the public at large about the situation in the youth field in the Republic of Belarus. The report presents contemporary statistical and sociological data on a wide range of issues. The main chapters of the report are the following: demographic characteristics of Belarusian youth, health of the young generation, education and science in young people's lives, socio-economic situation of young people, criminality among young people and youth in social and political processes.

The key statistical document that presents statistical data on children and youth is the [Statistical book "Children and youth in the Republic of Belarus, 2015"](#). The book presents statistical data on the number of children and youth, their composition by sex and age groups, marriages and divorces, births and deaths. The book contains statistics on educational institutions; on cultural, supplementary educational institutions, summer recreational camps, sanatorium, health improvement and recreational institutions. The book provides information on employment and unemployment among youth. Data are shown for the country as a whole as well as in a breakdown by regions and Minsk City.¹²

[The National Institute for Higher Education, Youth Policy and Sociocultural Communication Department](#) carries out fundamental research and applied research on

¹⁰ Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 1049 of 4 August 2011 "Regulations on the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus", Article 4.28.

¹¹ On the situation of youth in the Republic of Belarus 2015. National report, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, 2016.

¹² Children and youth in the Republic of Belarus, 2015. Statistical book, National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, 2016.

issues of state youth policy implementation in Belarus. The research “Youth: Sociocultural Adaptation and Creative Development” was completed in 2010-2015. Since 2016, the department has been carrying out scientific research on the topic “Professional and Competent Culture of a Specialist in Youth Work”. In addition, the department issues the academic journal [“Modern youth and society”](#).

[The Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Department of Sociology of Culture](#) conducts sociological studies on young people’s sociocultural life. Researchers intend to reconstruct the worldview of the young generation, to provide a comprehensive understanding of contemporary youth, as well as making certain predictions about its social and cultural behaviour in the future. The Department of Sociology of Culture has been working on a joint Belarusian-Lithuanian scientific project “The Specificity of Youth as a Subject of Socio-Cultural Space in the Context of Globalisation and Informatisation of Modern Society” since 2015.

The Belarusian State University actively contributes to data gathering on youth issues. There are two major centres conducting youth research. The [Educational and Scientific Centre for System Studies on Youth Issues of the Belarusian State University](#) is engaged in conducting scientific research aimed at revealing the role of youth in the innovative development of Belarusian society. The [Centre for Sociological and Political Studies of the Belarusian State University](#) (CSPSBSU) is carrying out research in the youth field. The most relevant publication that provides stakeholders and decision makers with comprehensive analytics on youth values, their social, cultural and economic activities as well as educational, marital and health status is [“Youth in Sovereign Belarus: Strokes to the Portrait”](#).¹³ The work is based on a series of studies carried out by the CSPSBSU in the period 1990-2012.

In 2017, the [online media library on youth information](#) on the Internet portal of the [Association of Youth Workers, Belarus](#) was launched. The media library provides users with access to key normative documents in the field of state youth policy; good practice examples in youth work, and online library on youth issues.

1.7. FUNDING YOUTH POLICY

In accordance with the [Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 65-Z of 7 December 2009 “On the Foundations of State Youth Policy”](#) (Article 22), the process of financing state youth policy implementation is carried out at the expense of the republican and/or local budgets and other sources not forbidden by law. Special funds may be established for the purpose of financing activities in the sphere of state youth policy, including support for talented and gifted youth.

Thus, as of 2016, 1 448 789 000 non-redenominated Belarusian rubles (BYR) at the national level (the MoE) as well as BYR 5 523 694 000 at the regional level were allocated to finance the implementation of the state youth policy in Belarus.¹⁴

However, it should be noted that the state youth policy gets additional funding from the programmes supporting young specialists, young families and families with many children,

¹³ Bulyanko D. M., Ivanyuto, O.V. and Rothmann D. G., “Youth of sovereign Belarus: strokes to a portrait”, Minsk, 2012.

¹⁴ Country Sheet Report – Belarus, European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy, published in 2016, <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9038134/Country+Sheet+Belarus-2016.pdf/b1bf1b76-b3c9-46e6-8c3d-3fd3b7f7eb58>, p. 19.

talented and gifted youth, temporary employment of young people, etc. The “Development of the System of Additional Education for Children and Youth” and “Youth Policy” sub-programmes are financed in the scope of EYP 2016-2020.

In the scope of the State Programme on Social Protection and Employment Promotion in 2016-2020 the following activities are financed: organisation of temporary employment for unemployed youth (the Youth Practice programme); temporary employment of students; labour and social adaptation of young workers (employees); monitoring of young workers’ adaptation; vocational guidance for young people.

Sub-programme “Art and Creativity”, Objective 1, “The organisation and holding of cultural events, the support of art and creativity, strengthening of international cultural co-operation, the creation of conditions for the aesthetic education of children and youth” is financed in the scope of the State Programme “Culture of Belarus” for 2016-2020, approved by the decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic Belarus of 4 March 2016 No. 180.

In the scope of the State Programme People’s Health and Demographic Security of the Republic of Belarus for 2016-2020, Sub-programme 1, “Family and Childhood” is financed by the following activities: development of teen-friendly centres (in co-operation with UNICEF and UNFPA); carrying out information and educational campaigns on the prevention of smoking, alcohol consumption and the promotion of healthy nutrition, physical activity and healthy lifestyle among adolescents and youth; informational support for young families, etc.

Talented and gifted youth are supported at the expense of the Special Fund of the President of the Republic of Belarus for Support of Talented Youth and the Special Fund of the President of Republic of Belarus for Social Support of Gifted Pupils and Students.

The regional councils of deputies and the Minsk City Council of Deputies allocate the funds transfer from the relevant local budgets to financial support of young and large families in repayment of debts on loans issued by banks for construction (reconstruction) or purchase of residential premises.

1.8. CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION

The Republic of Belarus carries out a multi-vector policy in the field of youth co-operation. Intending to widen international co-operation in the field of education, science, youth policy and sport, the Republic of Belarus has signed bilateral co-operation agreements with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Serbia, Saudi Arabia, China, Moldova, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Turkey and many others. In 2015, the Memorandum on Co-operation between the Visegrad Group countries and Ministries of the Eastern Partnership countries in the field of youth policy was signed.

International youth co-operation is carried out in many directions: the Union State of Russia and Belarus, CIS countries, the European Union (Eastern Partnership, Erasmus+), the Youth Department of the Council of Europe and many others.

Annually on the territory of the Russian Federation, the festival “Youth for the Union State” is held with the participation of the youth of Belarus and Russia. The aim of the festival is to

strengthen friendship and understanding between the youth of Belarus and Russia, create a common cultural space on the territory of the Union State, enhance intercultural understanding and create favourable conditions for the development of the creative potential of the youth of Russia and Belarus. In addition, the young people of Russia and Belarus hold a bike rally for the future of the Union State annually.

The International Forum of NGOs Leaders of the Union State is held to discuss practical issues of the Union State's development, to promote co-operation, and to implement bilateral projects in the youth field.

Representatives of the regions of the Russian Federation take an active part in the republican forums, for example in the Republican Forum of the Rural Youth, Forums of Working Youth, and the International Trade Union Youth Educational Forum "Temp-2017".

International youth co-operation within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is managed by the Council for Youth Affairs of the CIS member states. The Council has a mandate to develop co-operation among authorities in charge of youth issues in the CIS. The Council carries out its activities on the basis of the [Intergovernmental Agreement of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on co-operation in the sphere of work with youth](#) of 25 November 2005.

In 2010, the [Strategy for International Youth Co-operation of the Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period until 2020](#) (SIYCMNCIS 2020) was adopted. For the purpose of its implementation the Action Plan is adopted for a period of two years. On 13-14 July 2017, the CIS Executive Committee approved the draft Action Plan for 2018-2020 on the implementation of the SIYCMNCIS 2020 and sent it to the Council of the CIS Foreign Ministers for their final approval. According to the CIS Executive Committee press service the draft plan includes activities aimed at: training and professional development, ensuring equal access to quality education; involving the youth in entrepreneurial activities; prevention among the CIS youth of ethnic, religious and political extremism, preventing the spread of xenophobia and intolerance among young people; increase in the level of interethnic tolerance and development of intercultural dialogue, expansion of interaction of young representatives of ethnic diasporas of the CIS countries; support of socially vulnerable youth, including disabled people, orphans, children from large and dysfunctional families, refugees and internally displaced persons; creation of common information space in the field of international youth co-operation and support for the creation of networked communities; organisation of professional youth exchanges. The document also includes mechanisms for monitoring its implementation.¹⁵

As part of the current Action Plan, the international forum "Friendship without Borders", the international festival of youth initiatives "Open Project – Youth Co-operation", "Youth Days of the Commonwealth", and "Youth Patriotic Forum" were held. A Belarusian delegation takes part in the [Young CIS Parliamentarians Assembly](#).

Since 2013, under the initiative of the CIS Council of Youth Affairs in co-operation with the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, the project ["100 Ideas for the CIS"](#) has been

¹⁵ The Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States, http://iacis.ru/eng/pressroom/news/partnery/executive_committee_approves_the_document_aimed_at_developing_youth_cooperation_of_the_cis_member_na.

implemented. The project aims to actively engage the youth of the CIS member states in the development of innovative projects.

A successful example of cross-border youth co-operation is the international youth camp Be-La-Rus, which is held yearly on the Friendship Hill located at the junction of the Belarusian, Russian and Latvian borders.

At the European Union level Belarus takes part in the EU-funded project [“Youth Policy Support in the Eastern Partnership Region” \(EPYRU\)](#). The EPYRU aims to increase the effectiveness of the state youth policy implementation in the Eastern Partnership countries.

A number of youth public associations, education institutions and organisations take part in mobility programmes for young people, students and youth specialists under implementation of the framework of Youth in Action programme/Erasmus+, including projects of the European Voluntary Service (EVS).

Furthermore, Belarusian representatives take part in Eastern Partnership Youth Forums, Conferences on youth issues, round tables organised by the European Commission and its partners.

At the Council of Europe level, Belarus is represented by a national delegate at the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Joint Council on Youth. Since 2013, Belarus has taken part in the No Hate Speech Movement. Belarusian representatives take part in many youth programmes of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. *Inter alia*, interaction with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe is carried out through study visits with the support of the Information Point of the Council of Europe in Minsk. As an example, experts from the Republic of Belarus made a study visit to the Council of Europe Youth Department, the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg (25-30 October 2015). The visit of youth leaders and official representatives was focused on introducing Belarusian experts to the principles and approaches employed in the Council of Europe to implement youth policy at the European level. Experts from the Republic of Belarus took part in the work of consultative groups to prepare recommendations for the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Youth in Fields of Education and Socialisation (European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, 7-9 December 2015).

Belarus is represented by a national correspondent at the [European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy \(EKCYP\)](#) as well as an expert at [the Pool of European Youth Researchers \(PEYR\)](#).

The [UN Youth Advisory Panel](#) was established in Belarus in 2015. The Belarusian UN Youth Panel is comprised of 13 representatives aged from 14 to 31. One of the Panel’s aims is to spread information on the activities of the UN in Belarus and raise awareness about Belarus.

1.9. CURRENT DEBATES AND REFORMS

Taking into account the facts that the strategic documents in the sphere of youth policy of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to the 2020¹⁶ as well as amendments¹⁷ to the Law of Republic of Belarus “On Foundations of State Youth Policy” were adopted in 2015-2016, no reforms are foreseen in the near future.

Further debates addressed to the youth policy development are emphasised in the EYP 2016-2020.¹⁸ To be specific:

- increasing the role of youth in the implementation of socially significant initiatives and projects;
- young people’s active engagement in the volunteer and student work teams’ movements;
- facilitation of access for the talented and gifted youth to national economy, public administration, science and culture;
- providing comprehensive support in successful youth career development, implementation of youth personnel policy and increasing youth competitiveness in the labour market;
- further development of youth entrepreneurship infrastructure;
- increasing readiness of young people for family life and providing appropriate support for young families;
- taking measures to ensure safety in information networks and raising the level of young people’s digital literacy;
- active involvement of young people in healthy lifestyle activities through the implementation of effective methods and forms;
- providing additional support for young people who are in a challenging situation.
- developing a network of youth centres;
- staffing the management for professional youth work.

¹⁶ National Strategy for the Sustainable Social and Economic Development of Belarus for the period till 2030; National Social and Economic Development Programme for 2016-2020; “Education and Youth Policy” state programme for 2016-2020 and its Action Plan.

¹⁷ Law On Making Amendments and Addenda to the Law of Republic of Belarus No. 65-Z of 7 December 2009 “On Foundations of State Youth Policy”.

¹⁸ State Programme on Education and Youth Policy for the period 2016-2020, p. 66.