

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: KOSOVO¹ YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

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¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

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1.1 TARGET POPULATION OF YOUTH POLICY

In Kosovo, the [Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth](#) is the official document that defines the age group of young people. Young people are defined as persons aged between 15 and 24 years.

According to the [2015 annual statistical report by Kosovo's Agency of Statistics](#), the most recent General Census of Population and Housing was carried out in 2011. Kosovo has a population of 1 739 825 of which young people make up 19.4%.²

There is no mention of young people in the [Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo](#). However, the age eligibility for voting in both local and national elections, based on the [Law on General Elections of Kosovo](#), is 18. On the other hand, [the Criminal Code of Kosovo](#), in Article 17, defines the minimum age for criminal liability as 14.

1.2 NATIONAL YOUTH LAW

During the years 2003-2004, the Department for Youth at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, with the support of UNICEF and the German Corporation for International Co-operation (GIZ) and in co-operation with the International Council for National Youth Policies and a group of local law experts in Prishtina, compiled the first draft law for the empowerment and participation of youth.³ This law was not adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo until 30 September 2009, and it came into force on 5 November 2009.

The law aims to strengthen the participation of youth in decision-making processes in order to improve their quality of life, as well as their social status. It has a total of 19 articles and it incorporates the responsibilities of different central and local institutions and youth organisations in order to ensure wide youth participation in public life. In addition, it defines voluntary work and informal education of young people and provides instruction for the licensing of the so-called "Youth Centres".

² In the statistics young people are divided into two subcategories: a) aged 15-19, which is 10.2% of the population and b) aged 20-24, which is 9.2% of the population. Thus, the percentage of young people in Kosovo aged 15-24 is 19.4.

³ Shurdhani L. and Sylhasi V., "Empowerment of Kosovar Youth – Reality and Possibilities", Kosovar Foundation for Open Society, Prishtina, 2011, p. 15.

Based on the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth four administrative instructions were issued: 1. Administrative instruction for youth participating in the decision-making process; 2. Administrative instruction on licensing youth centres; 3. Administrative instruction for voluntary work; 4. Administrative instruction for non-formal education of youth.

To date, the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth has not undergone any revisions since its ratification in 2009.

1.3 NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY

The main document regarding the implementation of youth policy is the [Kosovo Strategy for Youth 2013-2017 and Action Plan 2013-2015](#) (KSYAP) drafted by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport of Kosovo and supported by international agencies. It is a strategic document which involves the vital interests of youth needs for the period 2013-2017.

The strategy aims to improve the overall situation of youth in Kosovo. KSYAP consists of two parts: the policy document itself and an action plan. The latter is a plan of activities foreseen to be implemented in a given period of time.⁴

The strategy promotes co-operation between youth organisations and government, improve the collaboration of central institutions with municipal bodies in order to empower youth policies and programmes. On the other hand, the youth action plan describes the steps for realisation of implementing the activities.

The KSYAP has incorporated social inclusion (gender, ethnicity, rural/urban youth and some marginalised groups) as a general approach that should be taken into account during the implementation of the activities.⁵

The strategy is divided into six main thematic areas: youth participation; education; employment and entrepreneurship; health; human security; and culture, sports and recreation. The strategy is consisted by strategic objectives:

- Youth participation

⁴ The Kosovar Strategy for Youth 2013-2017, p. 6.

⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

Increasing youth participation in decision-making processes and inclusion of youth in policy making.

- Non-formal education

Educate young people so they are prepared to face all life challenges, being conscious members of the local and European communities.

- Employment and entrepreneurship

Promotion of employment by training and supporting young entrepreneurs.

- Health promotion and education

Increase capacities of young people in regards to health protection and its importance for individual and social welfare.

- Human security

Young people are prepared to identify, prevent and address efficiently and effectively the risks that they face.

- Sports, culture and recreation

Integration of youth in social, economic and cultural life through various cultural and sports activities.⁶

In addition, the KSYAP incorporates seven principles: a) legitimacy, b) participation, c) equal treatment, d) common attitude, share of experiences and responsibilities, e) right of information, f) compilation of strategy based on evidence, and g) sustainability.

As stated by [administrative instruction No. 02/2010](#), released by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, the Ministry's Department of Youth (DoY) is responsible for the development of policies and strategies for the youth sector.

1.4 YOUTH POLICY DECISION MAKING

The Law on Empowerment and Participation of youth, in Article 6, paragraph 2, states that: "The Government by sub-legal act will determine the key Ministries, responsible for enforcing the provisions of paragraph 1 of Article 6 of this law." However, a recently published report of the Commission for Education, Science, Technology, Culture, Youth and

⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

Sports reveals that the Government of Kosovo has not yet issued a sub-legal act concerning this issue.⁷

Despite the fact that the responsibilities of certain ministries regarding the enforcement of the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth are not clearly provided, the main central authority in charge for youth policies is the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. According to Regulation No. 2001/19 and Regulation No. 2005/15, this ministry is responsible for developing policies and strategies for the youth sector, including the identification of specific youth vulnerable groups, developing programmes to address their needs and to promote clubs, groups and youth associations. In addition, the ministry is responsible for developing and implementing the relevant legislation for the establishment and functioning of organisations, clubs, groups and youth associations.

Inside this ministry, at the central level the DoY holds overall responsibility for the youth sector in Kosovo. This department has in its mandate:

- a) to implement strategic and operational plan for the youth sector;
- b) to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the situation of the youth sector (including legislation and programmes);
- c) to identify specific youth groups and develop certain programmes that deal with their needs;
- d) to develop programmes that aim to identify the needs of young women;
- e) to co-operate and co-ordinate, with other administrative departments, municipalities, national and international agencies and non-profit organisations, the development and implementation of coherent and efficient policies;
- f) to stimulate the establishment of clubs, groups, and youth associations in the whole territory of Kosovo and supervise their progress.⁸

The internal structure of the DoY consists of three divisions:

- 1) Division of Development and Support of Youth;
- 2) Division for Development of Integrated Policies;

⁷ Report by the Commission for education, science, technology, culture, youth and sport “Supervising the implementation of the Law No. 03/L-145, on Empowerment and Participation of Youth”, <http://advocacy-center.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Raport-mbi-Mbikqyrjen-e-zbatimit-te-Ligjit-nr.-03L-145-per-fuqizimin-dhe-pjesmarrje-te-rinise.pdf>, p. 7.

⁸ Website of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports: <http://www.mkrs-ks.org/?page=1,3>.

3) Division for Protection and Integration of Youth.⁹

The DoY performs policy development and policy co-ordination and implementation functions. Thus, in the youth policy area the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) co-operates closely with other government ministries: the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) and others. The MCYS is responsible for policy development and co-ordination while the other ministries are responsible for the actual service delivery to youth groups.¹⁰

Apart from the central administration, municipalities, according to the law on empowerment and participation of youth, also have the following responsibilities at the local level:

- to ensure the provision of financial and human resources for the implementation of youth programmes;
- to care for the provision of adequate public space in consultation with the council to resume the action of the municipality, where young people plan, manage and develop their youth activities and informal education;
- to support informal education for youth organisations and other development activities initiated by young people;
- to resume the action of youth policy development in consultation with the local youth council, in accordance with local needs;
- to ensure a transparent process during management engagement for public youth centres licensed by the municipality concerned.¹¹

Kosovo is divided into 38 municipalities. The main responsibilities of implementing youth policies at the local level lies with the Directorate for Culture, Youth and Sport. Except the municipality of Mamusha, other municipalities have established Municipal Directorates for

⁹ Regulation for internal organisation of Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, No. 03/2010 (in Albanian) http://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/Rreg_03-2010_per_organizimin_dhe_funksionimin_e_brendashem_ne_MKRS.pdf.

¹⁰ Reviews on youth policies and youth work in the countries of South East Europe, Eastern Europe and Caucasus: Kosovo (2011) http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kosovo_2011_Youth_Policy_Review.pdf , p. 14.

¹¹ Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation.

Culture, Youth, and Sports issues, or similar bodies. The number of staff members inside these departments varies from municipality to municipality.¹²

In addition to this, youth representative bodies such as Youth Action Councils (Central Youth Action Council and the Local Youth Action Council) and Youth Centres are relevant actors in terms of participating in designing policies and advocating of youth matters.

The Youth Action Councils were established by [Administrative instruction No. 11/2010](#) issued by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.¹³ The Central Youth Action Council serves as a youth representative body composed of members from youth non-profit organisations at central and local level. One of the main duties of the Central Youth Action Council is to participate in the drafting, implementing and evaluating youth policies. The same responsibility at the local level lies with the Local Youth Action Council.

The establishment and licensing of youth centres was regulated through the specific [Administrative instruction No. 11/2010](#), derived from the Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation. Youth centres operate within municipalities and offer spaces for youth programmes and activities based on their statute, in order to provide quality youth services. It is asserted that each municipality must have at least one licensed youth centre in their locality.¹⁴

A permanent Parliamentary Committee for Education, Science, Technology, Culture, Youth and Sports issues is in operation in Kosovo. This committee consists of nine deputies and its main role is to supervise and monitor relevant laws and policies implemented by the government/ministry relating to the specific area, and provide substantial recommendations and suggestions. Thus, the supervision and monitoring of the implementation of youth law and policies are discussed within this parliamentary committee.

1.5 CROSS-SECTORAL APPROACH WITH OTHER MINISTRIES

[The Kosovo Strategy for Youth 2013-2017 and Action Plan 2013-2015](#) is a document that aims to establish inter-institutional connectivity and inter-sector co-operation on issues that

¹² Report by National Council for European Integration (2013) – “Thematic Roundtable on Innovation Information Society, Social and Health Policies, Kosovo 2020”, http://www.president-ksgov.net/repository/docs/TRT_5_ENG.pdf, p. 63.

¹³ Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁴ Administrative Instruction No. 11/2010, article 3.

concern youth. According to the strategy and action plan, it is the responsibility and obligation of line ministries and local governance to exchange information, experiences and resources in order to meet all the objectives prescribed in the strategy.¹⁵ In addition, KSYAP is in harmony with other development strategies of the Republic of Kosovo, and also in accordance with the short-term and mid-term plan of the state budget.¹⁶ In the Youth Action plan are described steps for preparing the vision of the strategy by identifying relevant actors and responsible bodies for the implementation, as well as the necessary funds for it.

The monitoring process and final evaluation is led by the DoY which, based on strategy, at the end of each year prepares a progress report on the scale of fulfilment of objectives and announces it to all interested governmental and non-governmental parties. It is perceived that the DoY is the most advanced among Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports departments in terms of developing policy within its mandate and co-ordinates and monitors its delivery through a wide network of partners both in governmental and non-governmental sectors.¹⁷

Other ministries involved in the working group, such as the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Health have to report on monitoring and evaluation of activities which are carried out by these ministries or their subordinate institutions. Therefore, apart from the DoY, these ministries shall report periodically so that reports can be merged.¹⁸

1.6 EVIDENCE-BASED YOUTH POLICY

The political commitment to evidence-based youth policy is expressed in the Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation. It is the responsibility of the government “to collect and provide data on the position of young people” (Article 1.4), and also to “provide information and regular consultations with youth-related policies and programmes for youth in the country and international youth exchange programmes” (Article 1.6).

¹⁵ The Kosovar Strategy for Youth 2013-2017, p. 8.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁷ Functional review of Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, p. 21.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

This political commitment is included in the [Kosovo Strategy for Youth 2013-2017 and Action Plan 2013-2015](#). In this document, it is asserted that improving the situation of young people is foreseen to be conducted through research that intends to identify their needs. Therefore, it aims to support ongoing research that identifies youth needs and allows the development of youth policies based on particular evidence.¹⁹

As stated in the strategy, when drafted it was based on national and international documents, analyses of different internal work reports of the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports and other documents from many institutions. In addition, youth organisations, learners and students have been interviewed, in order to reach a multi-dimensional approach. The draft preparation stage has also included a number of events, roundtables, workshops and meetings with relevant stakeholders in the field of youth. Thus, it can be said that the DoY has incorporated many interested parties in designing this strategy.²⁰

Previous research and strategies developed by other ministries were taken into account during the process of drafting the national youth strategy. For example:

- [Strategy for Development of Higher Education in Kosovo \(2005-2015\)](#) – developed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology;
- [National Strategy and Action Plan for Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Kosovo 2011-2016](#) – developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare; and
- [Strategic Plan \(2007-2010\)](#) – developed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Despite this, there are no institutional mechanisms or budgetary allocations in terms of supporting research in the youth field in Kosovo. Further, there is no national youth data source. Most research focused on youth has been conducted by civil society organisations and international organisations. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is one of the international organisations that in close co-operation with national NGOs have provided important information regarding the situation of youth in Kosovo. A comprehensive study on youth by this foundation was conducted in 2012: [Kosovo Youth Study: Forward Looking, Grounded in Tradition](#).

The Parliamentary Committee for Education, Science, Technology, Culture, Youth and Sports issues, with the on-going support of the local NGO ‘Democracy Plus’, has also

¹⁹ The Kosovar Strategy for Youth 2013-2017, p. 9.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

conducted research that aimed to monitor the implementation of the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth: [Monitoring of the Implementation of Law No. 03/L-145 on Empowerment and Participation of Youth](#).

On the other hand, the evaluation of the national youth strategy lies within the responsibility of the DoY, which should distribute the results to all relevant stakeholders on the youth sector. However, to date, there has been no available evaluation research of this strategic document conducted by this department yet.

1.7 FUNDING YOUTH POLICY

For 2016, based on the [law on Budget of the Republic of Kosovo](#) 2016 the total amount allocated to the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports was €19 876 704, in which €1 426 419 was distributed to youth sector at the governmental level. For 2017, based on the [Law on Budget of the Republic of Kosovo for 2017](#), the allocation of the budget for the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports was significantly increased. The budget amount dedicated to this ministry is €33 539 942 while the budget for the youth programme is €2 041 372. So, only 6% of the overall ministry budget is allocated to the youth sector. In terms of the allocation of sub-programmes, the budget is as follows: a) Youth Prevention and Integration €374 423, b) Development and Support of Youth €1 253 109, c) Development of Integration Policies €413 840. Nevertheless, the budget issue remains very challenging at the municipal level. Kosovo has no specific budget code allocated solely for the youth sector at this level of governance. All the funding support for youth policies is shared through the budget line for subventions that are provided to the municipalities. The budget line differs depending on the institutional capacity of the municipalities. Thus, financing youth activities is a burden of the municipalities and the budget managed by the DoY does not guarantee equal and sustainable youth policies.²¹ As a matter of fact, in the same budget line for subventions, the municipalities also distribute it for other fields, like sports and culture.

Having a specific budget code for youth at the local level was one of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Science, Technology, Culture, Youth and Sports

²¹ “Youth at the crossroad; which is the right path”, <http://www.fes-prishtina.org/wb/media/Publications/2016/Rinia%20ne%20udhekryq%20b5-1.pdf>, p. 17.

Issues. It was asserted that the budget line for subventions provided to the municipalities leaves youth matters at their discretion. The municipalities do finance youth policies without an adequate plan, regulation or an effective monitoring of the implementation of the projects. It was suggested that a specific budget code can be realised through the Associations of Municipalities.²²

Kosovo is a partner country of the Erasmus+ Programme, in the Western Balkans section, which means that Kosovo can take part in certain actions of the programme. An Erasmus+ Office in Kosovo has been established with the aim of assisting the European Commission, the Executive Agency and the local authorities for the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme. Up to this time, Kosovo has benefited from 60 Erasmus+ projects. In the last call for application, 11 projects from Kosovo were supported.²³

1.8 CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION IN THE YOUTH FIELD

The republic of Kosovo signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Albania, an EU candidate country, in July 2015. The MoU aims to strengthen the co-operation between countries in terms of initiating common youth policies and programmes. The parties will stimulate co-operation and exchange about youth interest. The parties agreed to organise ‘Youth Week’ each year in Prishtina and Tirana, or any other city if agreed beforehand by the parties.²⁴

Kosovo has ratified [a law on the establishment of the Regional Youth Co-operation Office of the Western Balkans \(RYCO\)](#). This memorandum of co-operation was signed on 4 July 2016 by six Western Balkan countries: Kosovo, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Serbia. The mission of this office is to support regional youth exchange by sharing ideas of co-operation based on values of co-existence, tolerance and respect for human rights. In addition, it is dedicated to ensure

²² Transcript of the Committee meeting on 13 February 2017:

http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/proc/proc_2017_02_13_10_6849_al.pdf.

²³ Erasmus+ Office in Kosovo, website: <http://www.erasmuspluskosovo.org/tempus-2?lang=sq>.

²⁴ Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth of Albania, and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Kosovo, article 1.

implementation of joint programmes on youth related issues. Tirana will serve as the central office of the Secretariat of RYCO. The local branch office in Kosovo will be open soon.²⁵

Regarding international co-operation, the OSCE mission in Kosovo continuously supports the participation of young people in policy design and decision making by closely working with central and local institutions, youth civil society organisations, and young individuals. The OSCE mission drafted an important [Participatory Handbook for Local Youth Action Council](#). This handbook was designed to increase the understanding of LYAC members with the role, function and responsibilities of the council and to share good practice.

The co-operation on youth matters is also reflected within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with special emphasis on youth employability, gender equality and social inclusion.²⁶ Likewise, UNICEF within its project Innovation Lab supports young people to discover and propose innovative ideas in order to address various challenges faced by Kosovo's society.²⁷

1.9 CURRENT DEBATES AND REFORMS

Kosovo at the moment is in the process of consulting the new National Youth Strategy for the years 2018-2023, as well as the "Youth Action Plan 2018-2021". The first meeting for the strategic documents has already been held. The DoY has notified that in this process all relevant stakeholders at national and local level working in the youth sector will be included.²⁸

On 13 February 2017, the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Science, Technology, Culture, Youth and Sports discussed at its meeting the findings of the monitoring report of the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth, realised in co-operation with Democracy+. According to the head of this committee, based on the report findings, current changes to current administrative instructions are required. The main recommendations derived from the report are as follows:

²⁵ Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports website: <http://www.mkrs-ks.org/?page=2,6,1559#.WabahrIjHIV>.

²⁶ Website of UNDP Kosovo: http://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/successstories/Boosting_youth_emp.html.

²⁷ Website of UNICEF Lab: <http://kosovoinnovations.org/>.

²⁸ Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports website: <http://www.mkrs-ks.org/?page=2,6,1554#.WabZJLIjHIU>.

1. The Government of Kosovo should issue an administrative instruction that regulates the responsibilities of the ministries in implementing the Youth Law;
2. The Government shall draft a special law for voluntary work;
3. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) shall establish a commission for voluntary work of youth.
4. The MCYS shall establish a permanent commission on non-formal education of youth;
5. The MCYS in collaboration with the Central Youth Action Council shall organise the annual conference for youth of Kosovo;
6. The Ministry of Finance with the request of municipalities shall divide a specific budget code for youth;
7. The MCYS and municipalities shall harmonise the strategies and action plans for youth issues;
8. Municipalities shall ensure regular financing of Youth Centres and Local Youth Action Councils;
9. Municipalities should license at least one Youth Centre;
10. Municipalities should announce open youth project calls;
11. Municipalities shall establish an independent commission for the evaluation of youth projects.²⁹

The report was voted on by the members of the committee and therefore delivered to be approved at the parliamentary plenary session. The hearing of this report was on the day agenda in parliament on 11-19 April 2017, but due to the absence of the head of this committee it was postponed until the next parliamentary session. A motion of no confidence in the government was passed the following month, and as a consequence the hearing of this report in the parliament remained inconclusive.

²⁹ Transcript of the Committee meeting on 13.2.2017 (only available in Albanian):
http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/proc/proc_2017_02_13_10_6849_al.pdf.