

Youth Partnership

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



CONTRIBUTION OF ERASMUS+ PARTNER COUNTRIES TO EU YOUTH WIKI

CHAPTER I BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

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Background

At the proposal of the European Commission, the EU-CoE youth partnership network of country correspondents in EKYP (European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy) is contributing to EU Youth Wiki with knowledge and information on a number of Erasmus+ non-programme countries from South East Europe and Eastern Europe and Caucasus. The contributors use the guidelines of 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 updated version of pilot report of the EU Youth Wiki “Light” contributions for Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2016.

1.1. TARGET POPULATION OF YOUTH POLICY

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a state constituted by two entities: Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is also the self-governing District of Brcko.

National youth policy is not existing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to its constitutional structure and because certain jurisdictions (including youth) are tied by the constitution to a certain level of government.

The youth issues at the national level are under the jurisdiction of the [Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and the newly established [Section for youth and mobility](#) at the [Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Civil Affairs](#).

A government representative from each entity is the member of the Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the national level.

Most of the constitutional competences regarding youth issues are at the entity government level: Republika Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those competences are reflected in drafting and implementation of youth policies, establishing and defining the measures and recommendations regarding youth work, youth organizing, youth representation and youth activities as well as international cooperation.

The competences at the entity level in the field of youth are within the following ministries: [Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports of Republika Srpska](#) and [Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Culture and Sports](#).

The [Law on Youth Organisation of the Republika Srpska](#), the [Youth Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and the [Brcko District Law on youth](#) define the age limits for youth as a target group from 15 to 30.

1.2. NATIONAL YOUTH LAW

Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a national youth law. The [Law on Youth Organisation of the Republika Srpska](#) (Zakon o omladinskom organizovanju Republike Srpske), and the [Youth Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) (Zakon o mladima Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine) define the youth policy framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina [Law on youth](#) (Zakon o mladima Brčko distrikta BiH).

The [Law on Youth Organisation of the Republika Srpska](#) was amended two times. The first was in [2008](#) and the second in [2011](#).

The Youth Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brcko District has not

undergone amendments.

All three existing laws define youth as 15-30 years old.

Law in Republika Srpska defines the general interest and programmes in the field of youth, establishment and association of youth organizations, activity, property and financing, rights and obligations, professional work and training, youth events, international youth cooperation, information, and bodies for the development of Youth Policy.

Federation BiH Youth law defines the following: Drafting and implementation of youth policies at all government levels in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Establishing criteria in compliance with European principles in the activities of public institutions related to the implementation of youth policies, establishing and defining measures and recommendations in relation to youth work and youth activities, Strengthening youth participation and inclusion and their informing at all decision-making levels in the Federation based on the established participation mechanisms, Strengthening youth volunteering and their voluntary participation in activities related to youth issues, Implementation of principles of non-discrimination, solidarity and ethics in all activities related to youth issues, Building of human, technical and administrative capacities of youth associations.

Brcko District Law on youth defines the rights and obligations of young people, youth organization, youth care, institutional participation of young people in decision-making and other issues of interest to the life, position and activities of young people in the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1.3. NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY

Bosnia and Herzegovina do not have a national youth strategy.

For the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Youth Strategy, the process of adopting the Youth strategy started in 2013. The document "[Analysis of Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina Youth Conditions and Needs](#)" was produced in 2013 and the Draft Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Youth Strategy was adopted by members of the Working Group in 2015 but this strategy document was not adopted. Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina formed a [Working Group](#) in 2015.

The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina worked on the development of the Youth Strategy for Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2016-2020 (Strategija prema mladima Federacije BiH 2016-2020, working draft name of the document), but it was not be adopted by the end of 2016. It is not known why this strategy was not adopted.

The National Assembly of the Republika Srpska adopted the Proposal of the third [Youth Policy of the Republika Srpska](#) for 2016-2020 (Омладинска политике Републике Српске од 2016. до 2020. године) during its 13th session held on 13 and 14 July 2016.

The Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a Youth Strategy but since the year 2018 the Brcko District Youth council was formed and now there is a legal opportunity to work on this document.

The Draft Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Youth Strategy 2016-2020 focused on seven priorities:

- work, employment, and youth entrepreneurship
- youth education and science
- youth social welfare
- youth health protection
- youth security
- culture, art and sport
- youth activism (participation, volunteering and mobility).

The Youth Policy of the Republika Srpska 2016-2020 focused on five strategic priorities:

- employability
- active participation
- healthy lifestyles
- excellence
- leisure time.

Strategic priorities focus on five strategic aims:

- 1.3.1. Improve youth employability.
- 1.3.2. Improve possibilities for active participation of youth.
- 1.3.3. Develop youth healthy lifestyles.
- 1.3.4. Assure support to youth excellence.
- 1.3.5. Improve possibilities for quality youth leisure time.

The Youth Policy issues at national level are in the jurisdiction of the [Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). The fact that Youth policy issues are under the Entity (Republika Srpska and Federation BiH jurisdiction – some authorities over youth are transferred to this State level body). The Commission for Co- ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina proposes and implements: solutions for the institutional framework; the construction of recommendations for youth policy; initiatives towards government and parliaments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including recommendations for creating new and replacing or adding to already existing legal solutions; the organisation of meetings with young people; initiatives regarding international and other institutions about the youth-related issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The [Ministry of Civil Affairs](#) has responsibility over the work of the Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The 2009 decision of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers reconstructed the composition and position of the Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Namely, [Under the 2009 decision, the Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) became a separate body within the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This decision was taken to establish the conditions for a more effective and efficient performance of the Commission for Co- ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

[The Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport](#) of the Republika Srpska is the Republika Srpska Government authority responsible for the implementation, co-ordination and monitoring of

the Republika Srpska Youth Policy. However, an action plan allowing systematic implementation of the strategy, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy was not adopted until September 2016.

The Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports of the Republika Srpska, within its legal competence, prepares and submits to the National Assembly or the Government of the Republika Srpska, in the form of a draft, legal and sub-legal acts as well as other acts of interest for the Republika Srpska which are within the competence of the Ministry. The Ministry of Youth and Sport is carrying out the youth-related activities through the [Department for Youth](#). The Department for Youth performs administrative and other professional tasks relating to the following: determination of the National Action Plan and Youth Policy of the Republic and taking care of its application; creation of the assumptions for solution of youth issues – employment of the young, improvement of their social status, inclusion into society; implementation of youth projects; encouraging an active participation of the young in society; establishment of youth centres; co-operation with youth organisations; international co-operation in the domain of organisation and activity of young people.

[Creation of the new Youth Policy in the Republika Srpska](#) started in 2021 and up to now there is no official data about the process but the Research on youth needs in Republika Srpska has been conducted but the results are not published yet.

The [Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport](#) carries out the administrative, expert and other tasks as laid down by the legislation related to the competencies of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the areas of: scientific researches activities in the field of safeguarding and use of cultural-historical heritage; museums, archives, libraries, publishing, theatre, music, fine arts, film and show business activities, activity of organisations and associations of citizens in the field of arts, culture, sport and youth; improvement of sport and physical culture; establishing development strategies in the field of culture, sport and youth, as well as other tasks laid down by the legislation governing this field.

The Ministry of Culture and Sport carrying out the youth-related activities through the [Youth Department](#). The Youth Department performs tasks related to: overall institutional mechanisms of government's care for young people, co-operation and co-ordination tasks with the youth sector and youth associations to study the needs and problems of young people, as well as defining and proposing a federal youth strategy, establishing and maintaining a comprehensive youth database in co-operation with other institutions in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, activities related to informing young people and strengthening youth involvement in decision-making processes, defining, establishing and implementing a programme of action for youth in the areas of competence of the ministry, the planning of special funds in the budget for execution of tasks arising from the Law on Youth of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, monitoring the implementation of existing programmes in the field of youth at the federal level, the co-ordination of international co-operation relating to youth, determination procedures and training certification of youth, making analyses, reports, information, reports, studies, programmes, plans, estimates and other technical, information, planning, documentation and analytical materials in the field of youth, professional processing system solutions of importance to young people, and perform other tasks in order to protect the interests of young people.

1.4. YOUTH POLICY DECISION-MAKING

The decision-making process at the national level are in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The parliamentary commission in charge of youth issues is the [Joint Committee on Human Rights, Rights of Children, Youth, Immigration, Refugees, Asylum and Ethics](#). The Joint Committee considers issues in the domain of human rights, the rights of children, youth, immigration, refugees, asylum and ethics.

The [Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) is responsible for the confirmation of their basic principles and for the co-ordination of activities of all groups of significance to the promotion and protection of the roles and positions of young people of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the goal of improving their living conditions, and also for the international representation of issues which relate to Bosnian-Herzegovinian young people.

The topics of the Commission are, in concordance with the authorities of relevant institutions: confirming the basic principles of the co-ordination of activities related to youth; harmonising plans of entity bodies of government in connection to youth; defining strategies with international plans regarding youth; analysing problems of youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina; co-ordinating youth projects; gathering and distributing information from the youth issues field.

A National Agency for Youth does not exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport is the Republika Srpska Government decision-making authority. The National Assembly of the Republika Srpska [Committee for Children, Youth and Sport](#) is considering legislative proposals, strategies, information, reports and annual work plans of national authorities and organisations responsible for the youth policy. This Committee also discusses the situation of young people in society, considers the protection of the rights of children and young people, follows the development of sports and physical culture, and works to promote the rights and interests of the child. At the level of the Republika Srpska there is the [Youth Committee](#), which is composed of several members: Republika Srpska Ministry representatives, [Youth Council of Republika Srpska](#) and representatives of the Committee for Youth Affairs of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska. The Youth Committee, within the jurisdictions given, proposes and gives opinions on: objectives, policies and measures proposed by the youth policy; programmes that are financed from the budget of the Republika Srpska and local governments; youth activities that are the priority for the Republika Srpska and local governments, the criteria for allocation of funds from the entity and municipal budgets of the Republika Srpska for the implementation of the Youth Policy.

The [Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport](#) is the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Government decision-making authority. The [House of Peoples](#) Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Sport and Youth Affairs, amongst other responsibilities, considers planning and development programmes in the field of education, science, culture, sports and technical culture and the issues of protection of children and young people and their participation in all sectors of society, as well as the protection of children and youth from all forms of addiction, as well as other issues related to education, science, culture, sports and life of young people from the jurisdiction of the House of Peoples.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has three the most significant youth councils: the [Youth Council at the Republika Srpska](#) level, serving as an umbrella representative body, which is legally defined under the Law on Youth Organisation of the Republika Srpska since 2004; the [Youth Council of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) was established in December 2015 after the six Cantonal Youth Councils have been established in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina during 2014- 2015; and the [Youth Council of Brcko District](#) established in 2018.

At the level of the Republika Srpska there is the [Council for youth](#), which is composed of several members (ministers in the Republika Srpska government representatives, [Youth Council of Republika Srpska](#) and representatives of the Committee for Youth Affairs of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska).

All three Youth councils from Bosnia and Herzegovina signed [Agreement of future cooperation at youth conference in city Bihac](#), 29.08.2020. that defines their joint actions towards future youth initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is no data on the agreement itself.

1.5. CROSS-SECTORAL APPROACH WITH OTHER MINISTRIES

The [Youth Council](#) of the Republika Srpska was established by the Government of the Republika Srpska following the proposal of the ministry, with the mission to give their opinions on professional issues in the field of youth policy and its implementation. Council members are: the Minister of Family, Youth and Sports; the [Minister of Education and Culture](#); the [Minister of Health and Social Welfare](#); [Minister of Labour, War Veterans and Disabled Persons' Protection](#); the [Minister of Finance](#); a representative of the working body which deals with youth issues of the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska; and three representatives of the Youth Council of Republika Srpska.

The document "Youth Policy of the Republika Srpska 2016-2020" explained the multi-sectoral approach in the part relating to the implementation of the document with defined actors for each measure, which will be further developed through the projects in the Action Plan implementing the youth policy. Action plans are not available so it is hard to say was this principle followed.

Most of the measures, programmes, projects and activities defined by the document was planned to be implemented within all institutions, organisations, departments and services involved. The Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports was the main co-ordinator for the planning, implementation and monitoring. In addition, a cross-sectoral team was supposed to be established in order to develop and implement an action plan for the implementation of Youth Policy and ensure that:

- this document is project-driven, the activities and work related to the implementation will be co-ordinated;
- analytical, managerial and communication capacities are provided, in order to successfully work on achieving the set goals;
- planning and reporting are co-ordinated;

- support is given to the constructive involvement of stakeholders (youth organisations, civil society organisations, the business sector, international organisations, representatives of the professional community in these areas and other key stakeholders) during the preparation and implementation of the action plan;
- efficient operation of the implementation through centralised co-ordination and support is ensured which includes the development of programmes, reports, analysis, organising meetings.

There are no available data, at the moment, about the implementation of the “Youth Policy of the Republika Srpska 2016-2020”.

1.6. EVIDENCE-BASED YOUTH POLICY

As in current time, there is not any youth policy at BiH state or entity level.

The existing statistics dating from the 2013 Population Census in Bosnia and Herzegovina includes information on different population aspects, but no specific indicator has been established precisely for the youth population.

There is no specific line of funding aimed at the evidence-based evaluation of government and/or the ministry activities and policies.

1.7. FUNDING YOUTH POLICY

At national level, the BiH Ministry Council Ministry allocate funds for the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, that administers the budget allocated to administrative and staff costs for the ministry and for the work of the Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This part of the budget cannot be separated from the total operational allocations.

The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s budget has one budget line dedicated for youth called “Transfer for youth”, in the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport, as support to youth organisations and financing the Youth Council of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports finances the youth organisations and programmes for young people including the Youth Council of the Republika Srpska.

The Youth Council of Brcko District is funded by the Brcko District Government and the Department for Expert and Administrative Affairs.

1.8. CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION

Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently a beneficiary of the [Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance 2014-2020](#) (IPA II) programme, which opens opportunities for cross- border co-operation in the field of civil society. Bosnia and Herzegovina currently participates in six programmes within the framework of the IPA Component II Cross- Border Co-operation: three bilateral cross-border co-operation (CBC) programmes with its immediate neighbours

Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, a CBC programme with EU Member States (IPA Adriatic CBC programme) and two transnational programmes (South-East Europe and Mediterranean).

[EU countries](#) such as Germany, Italy, Austria, France and Sweden, through their respective embassies and development agencies, invested in youth policy development at the national and local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The [OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) is active in the youth field through its initiative to establish the [Youth Advisory Group at the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and a more recent [initiative](#) aiming to develop school-supported activities to counter and prevent violent extremism from taking ground in educational environments.

Non-EU countries active in youth development field in Bosnia and Herzegovina are USA and Switzerland. Those countries are active through their respective embassies and developmental agencies and have country strategies documents that highly prioritise youth issues.

All three national youth councils from Bosnia and Herzegovina signed [Memorandum of Partnership and Understanding](#) with the [National Youth Council of Serbia](#), the [National Youth Council of Macedonia](#) and the [Youth Network of Montenegro](#). This Memorandum has a goal to strengthen existing cooperation, communication and understanding between umbrella alliances in Western Balkans. The representative of [Kosovar Youth Council](#) participated in this meeting online.

Opportunities for youth cross border cooperation is possible via the [Regional Youth Co-operation Office](#) (RYCO) and [Western Balkans Youth Lab Project](#) implemented by the [Regional Cooperation Council](#).

Cross border cooperation youth projects are also available for funding by [Erasmus+ youth](#) and [European Solidarity Corps](#). Contact point for those two programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina is [PRONI Center for youth development](#).

1.9. CURRENT DEBATES AND REFORMS

The current debates related to youth policy governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina are not at the governmental priorities. The [Commission for Co-ordination of Youth Issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) is not active and current efforts of all three Bosnian and Herzegovina Youth councils are focused on re-establishing this working body with the youth representatives from Youth councils.

Second development are changes in Youth councils, Federation BiH and Brcko District council elected new leadership this year and it is expected that Republika Srpska Youth council will have new leadership by the end of the year.

Republika Srpska and Brcko District started the process of adopting the Youth policies for next five years. The Federation of BiH, on the other hand, has not yet announced any activities towards adopting its first Youth policy. The status is that Republika Srpska and Brcko District finished the research on youth needs but those documents are not public yet.

1.10. REFERENCES

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