



**Youth**Partnership

# ***QUESTIONNAIRE***

# ***“PARTICIPATION”***

# ***GERMANY***



**Youth**Partnership  
Council of Europe  
European Commission



c/o Council of Europe :: Directorate of Youth and Sport :: F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France  
Fax: (33) 3 88 412 778 :: E-mail: youth-partnership@coe.int :: [www.youth-partnership.net](http://www.youth-partnership.net)

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# **1 Structures of participation at the local, regional or national level**

## **1.1 Youth parliaments**

### **1.1.1 Local youth parliaments**

There is no uniform structure or definition for youth parliaments in Germany. Instead you find a broad variation of different forms and models including both formal structures in which youth people are elected and that have links to local authorities as well as youth forums and similar events that are open to all young people. An overview on the work of different local youth parliaments can be found at [www.jugendbeteiligung.info/praxistipps/22667.html](http://www.jugendbeteiligung.info/praxistipps/22667.html).

### **1.1.2 Regional youth parliaments**

As for local youth parliaments there is no uniform structure or definition for regional youth parliaments (see above). Activities for regional youth parliaments can be found in North Rhine-Westfalia and Baden-Wuerttemberg but their involvement in decision-making processes is quite low.

### **1.1.3 National youth parliament**

There is no national youth parliament so far.

## **1.2 Youth councils**

### **1.2.1 Local youth councils**

Local youth councils can be found in four of five youth administrative districts (Jugendamtsbezirk). This means that in one-fifth of the youth administrative districts youth organisations do not have an institutionalised interest representation. Apart from Bavaria district and city youth councils can decide themselves on their structures and their working fields. The structure for youth councils in Bavaria is fixed due to the special role that has been given to them since the post-war period.

Currently there are about 120 district youth councils and 65 city youth councils in Germany. The working group of youth councils of large cities (Großstadtjugendringe) encompasses 30 members. A study of the German Youth Institute on the structure, the functioning and the options for actions of local youth councils in Germany from 2005 can be downloaded at [http://www.dji.de/bibs/64\\_5609\\_JugendringeimVisier.pdf](http://www.dji.de/bibs/64_5609_JugendringeimVisier.pdf) (in German).

### **1.2.2 Regional youth councils**

Each of the 16 German federal states has its own regional youth council (Landesjugendring) representing regional youth organisations and local youth councils. Their role in decision-making processes differs from federal state to federal state.

The 16 regional youth councils are:

- Bavarian Youth Council, [www.bjr.de](http://www.bjr.de)
- Children and Youth Council of Saxony, [www.jugendinfo.net](http://www.jugendinfo.net)
- Children and Youth Council of Saxony-Anhalt, [www.kjr-lsa.de](http://www.kjr-lsa.de)
- Regional Youth Council of Baden-Wuerttemberg, [www.ljrbw.de](http://www.ljrbw.de)
- Regional Youth Council of Berlin, [www.ljrberlin.de](http://www.ljrberlin.de)
- Regional Youth Council of Brandenburg, [www.ljr-brandenburg.de](http://www.ljr-brandenburg.de)
- Regional Youth Council of Hamburg, [www.ljr-hh.de](http://www.ljr-hh.de)
- Regional Youth Council of Lower Saxony, [www.ljr.de](http://www.ljr.de)
- Regional Youth Council of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, [www.jugend.inmv.de](http://www.jugend.inmv.de)
- Regional Youth Council of North Rhine-Westfalia, [www.ljr-nrw.de](http://www.ljr-nrw.de)
- Regional Youth Council of Rhineland-Palatinate, [www.ljr-rlp.de](http://www.ljr-rlp.de)
- Regional Youth Council Saar, [www.landesjugendring-saar.de](http://www.landesjugendring-saar.de)
- Regional Youth Council of Schleswig-Holstein, [www.ljrsh.de](http://www.ljrsh.de)
- Regional Youth Council of Thuringia, [www.ljrt.de](http://www.ljrt.de)
- Youth Council of Bremen, [www.bremerjugendring.de](http://www.bremerjugendring.de)
- Youth Council of Hessen, [www.hessischer-jugendring.de](http://www.hessischer-jugendring.de)

### **1.2.3 National youth council**

The German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring, DBJR) was founded in 1949 as a working group of youth organisations and regional youth councils active throughout Germany. Its current membership includes 24 youth organisations, the 16 regional youth councils and 5 affiliated organisations. The 5 affiliated organisations have an advisory vote.

To become full member of the DBJR youth organisations have to fulfil the following criteria:

- recognition of the Declaration of Human Rights and commitment to the free democratic constitutional structure of the Federal Republic of Germany;
- have at least 25.000 members and be represented in the majority of the federal states;
- have their own statutes and be able to decide independently.

The youth organisations united in the DBJR are diverse in both aims and orientation. The variety of member organisations spans from religiously oriented associations, scouts, ecological, cultural and humanitarian organisations to worker's youth federations. The party political youth organisations are not members of the DBJR but form their own council: the Council of Political Youth Organisations.

The work of the DBJR focuses on three priorities:

- to represent youth interests and common aims of its member organisations - to public, parliament and government;
- to ensure an ongoing information flow between its member organisations and to enable them to achieve common positions on youth policy;
- to cooperate with youth organisations and national youth councils outside Germany.

Contact: info@dbjr.de, [www.dbjr.de](http://www.dbjr.de)

## **2 Percentage of young people in global population who are members of institutions allowing for participation in representative democracy**

### **2.1 Percentage of Young people who are members of a political party**

Ca. 230 000 young people

*Comment:* As the age group differs among the numbers provided by the party political youth organisations it is not possible to give the percentage.

#### **2.1.1 Percentage of Young people who are members of a political party by age groups**

13-15	16-18	19-21	22-24	25-27	28-30
N/A %	N/A %	N/A %	N/A %	N/A %	N/A %

#### **2.1.2 Percentage of Young people who are members of a political party by rural-urban**

rural	urban
N/A %	N/A %

### **2.2 Percentage of Young people who are members of a trade union**

Ca. 3.7 %

*Comment:* Based on data provided by the Federation of German Trade Unions.

### **2.3 Percentage of Young people who are members of a youth organisation**

Ca. 6.7 %

*Comment:* This is the percentage of membership provided by the German Federal Youth Council ([www.dbjr.de](http://www.dbjr.de))

#### **2.3.1 Percentage of Young people who are members of a youth organisation by age groups**

No information available

### **2.3.2 Percentage of Young people who are members of a youth organisation by gender**

No information available

### **2.3.3 Percentage by gender of young people who are members of a youth organisation by type of general activities**

The number provided in 2.3 is made up from the national youth council and based upon numbers provided by its member organisations which represent a broad variety (e.g. scouts organisations, organisations active in the fields of ecology, culture, humanitarian aid, work with rural youth, educational and spiritual work). Not included is the membership of the party political youth organisations. For more information: [www.dbjr.de](http://www.dbjr.de) > Der DBJR > Mitgliedsorganisationen

## **3 Existing actions/support, of national or regional scope, to promote the participation of young people in local life and follow-up mechanisms**

Of importance are three different approaches to youth participation:

- representative forms of youth participation (young people or representatives of youth organisations are elected in communal bodies like youth municipal councils);
- open forms of youth participation (free access for all interested children and young people to participate spontaneously in youth forums or youth assemblies);
- project-orientated forms of youth participation (participation projects which are limited both in time and themes and work often with creative methods).

Other forms of youth participation are

- representation of children and youth people in “adult” committees;
- contacts with politicians.

When it comes to promoting participation of young people in local life Germany counts on the dense network of youth organisations supported by the state. Involvement and participation play a basic role in the work of these organisations. They offer a broad range of activities for children and young people to strengthen youth participation on local and regional level.

Apart from funding organisations, projects and activities the state supports youth participation i.e. by offers and discounts for people working as volunteers in youth organisations (i.e. special regional laws on vacation, national youth leader card “Juleica”, [www.juleica.de](http://www.juleica.de)).

In addition to this an action programme is currently realised by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Federal Agency for Civic Education and the German Federal Youth Council. The “Action Programme to Increase Youth Participation” (2006-2009) aims at fostering the civic commitment and participation of children and young people by various initiatives and projects

as well as at sensitising adults for the interests and concerns of the young generation ([www.du-machst.de](http://www.du-machst.de)).

Another example is the Federal programme “Entimon – together against violence & right-wing extremism“ that strives for the promotion of democracy, tolerance and a new participation culture among young people, [www.entimon.de](http://www.entimon.de).

The Resource Centre Youth Participation (Servicestelle Jugendbeteiligung, [www.jugendbeteiligung.info](http://www.jugendbeteiligung.info)) supports participation projects of young people who are mainly not active in youth organisations and realises itself model participation projects. It is represented at national and regional level.

There is no general obligation for a follow-up of the activities promoting youth participation. But for actions funded by the state organisations have to report about the achieved effects.

### **3.1 Legal actions to support the structures for Participation of Young people in local life**

The participation of children and young people is reflected in the fundamental legal norms of the Federal Republic of Germany. Furthermore the UN Convention on Children’s Rights is part of the German legal order.

The Social Code Volume Eight (SGB VIII), Child & Youth Services, Chapter 1, § 8 states that children and young people have to be involved in decisions of the child and youth services that affect them while considering their stage of development. For certain fields of the child and youth services this is further specified.

For the participation of children and young people at the local level more detailed regulations can be found in communal constitutions implementing SGB VIII.

Some local instruments are:

- setup of local youth councils or youth committees;
- petition, hearing, speaking and proposal rights;
- children’s offices as contact points for the specific interests of children and youth;
- children’s lawyers.

Apart from the regulations of SGB VIII i.e. the German federal building code (Baugesetzbuch) requires that the social and cultural needs of young people have to be considered in construction plans.

Moreover school laws and work constitution acts foresee the participation of young people in fields which affect them.

### **3.2 Financial actions to support the various structures for youth political and NGO**

#### **Participation**

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth grants annual subsidies to national youth organisations and their regional associations. Funding instrument is the Child and Youth Plan of the Federation (Kinder- und Jugendplan des Bundes) by which the government supports child and youth policy as well as child and youth services in Germany. The Child and Youth Plan of the Federation foresees more than 100 million Euro per year of which 13 % go directly to youth organisations that fulfil certain criteria. For more information see <http://www.kinder-jugendhilfe.info/cgi-bin/showcontent.asp?ThemaID=4729>.

Besides the federation the federal states give grants to the youth organisations on the regional level and realise own participation projects. The same stands for the local level.

Funds for participation projects are also provided by German Children's Aid Association (Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk, DKHW), the German Youth Stamp Foundation (Stiftung Deutsche Jugendmarke) and other associations/foundations.

Youth Banks allow young people to make funding decisions about local youth activities, through giving grants to projects led by young people (between 15 and 25). The subsidy per project amounts from 50 to 400 Euros. The Youth Banks were developed by the German Children and Youth Foundation (Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung) and jointly realised with the Service Center for Youth Participation (Servicestelle Jugendbeteiligung). They receive support from the Deutsche Bank Foundation. More information: [www.youthbank.de](http://www.youthbank.de).

Every two years the German Federal Youth Council and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth award prizes to outstanding participation projects of young people with a total volume of 15.000 €. More information: [www.heinz-westphal-preis.de](http://www.heinz-westphal-preis.de).<sup>\*\*</sup>

### **3.3 Other planned initiatives in the short term to support youth participation on the local level**

N/A

### **3.4 Existing or planned actions aiming at certain specific groups of young people?**

Yes.

Examples from the Action Programme to Increase Youth Participation ([www.du-machst.de/ueber-uns/projektbausteine](http://www.du-machst.de/ueber-uns/projektbausteine)):



- Competition of the Federal Agency of Civic Education for *young migrants and less-educated young people* in order to encourage them to play an active role in democratic society. The thirteen projects that won the competition are realised in 2008.
- “Come in Cont(r)act” supports projects of children and young people *between 12 and 21* aiming at bringing young people into contact with local authorities and involving them in decision-making processes.
- “Berlin 08”: In June 2008 several thousand young people *between 14 and 24* will be invited to a festival on young politics in Berlin.

## **4 The vote**

### **4.1 Obligatory**

No

### **4.2 Age of the right to vote?**

From 18 years old

For local elections in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westfalia, Saxony-Anhalt and Schleswig-Holstein: from 16 years old

### **4.3 Entitlement to vote in local, regional and national elections**

Germans if...

- they have been resident in the Federal Republic of Germany for at least three months,
- or are a soldier, civil servant or public service worker who had been sent abroad by the employer (including family members),
- or they live in an EU state,
- or they have not been living abroad for more than 25 years and
- are not excluded from the electoral register.

For local elections: citizens of another EU member state having their domicile in Germany

### **4.4 Age of eligibility to be a candidate**

From 18 years old

For elections to the federal parliament of Hessen: from the age of 21

### **4.5 Entitlement to be a candidate in local, regional or national elections.**

Every German ...

- who has no criminal record,
- who is not excluded from the electoral register.

For local elections: citizen of another EU member state having their domicile in Germany and fulfilling the same criteria as German candidates have to

## 5 The elections

### 5.1 Number of young people voting between the ages of 18 (or the age of the right to vote) and 30

N/A

### 5.2 Number of young people between the ages of 18 (or the age of the right to vote) and 30 registered on the lists of voters

N/A

### 5.3 European indicators of Participation in the polls

#### 5.3.1 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote who are registered

N/A %

#### 5.3.2 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by age groups

18-21	22-25	26-30
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N/A %	N/A %	N/A %
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#### 5.3.3 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people in age to vote registered, by gender

female	male
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N/A %	N/A %
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#### 5.3.4 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered by rural-urban

rural	urban
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N/A %	N/A %
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**5.3.5 In European elections, the percentage of Young people s Participation in relation to the total population to vote**

N/A %

**5.4 National indicators of Participation in the polls**

**5.4.1 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered**

No national elections in 2007

**5.4.2 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by age groups**

18-21	22-25	26-30
N/A	N/A	N/A

**5.4.3 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by gender**

female	male
N/A	N/A

**5.4.4 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered by rural-urban**

rural	urban
N/A%	N/A%

**5.4.5 National elections, Young people as a percentage of Participation in the total population to vote**

N/A

**5.5 Regional and local indicators of Participation in the polls**

**5.5.1 Regional and local elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered**

In 2007 there were regional and local elections in the federal state of Bremen and local elections in the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt, but the data is not available yet.

### **5.5.2 In regional and local elections the percentage of Young people Participation in relation to the total population to vote**

N/A %

### **5.6 Number of Young people elected (under the age of 30) at the national level**

4 persons (born after 31<sup>st</sup> December 1977)

female	male
2 persons	2 persons

### **5.7 Number of Young people elected (under the age of 30) at the regional level**

36 persons (born after 31<sup>st</sup> December 1977)

Most young deputies can be found in the regional parliament of Berlin (11 persons), followed by the regional parliament of Bremen (6 persons). Most of the other regional parliaments have only one to three deputies under the age of 30, no young people under 30 are represented in the regional parliaments of Bavaria, Schleswig-Holstein and Saxony-Anhalt.

female	male
13 persons	23 persons

### **5.8 Number of Young people elected (under the age of 30) at the local level**

N/I persons

female	male
N/I persons	N/I persons

## **6 Existing actions/support, of national or regional scope, promoting the participation in the system of representative democracy and follow-up mechanisms?**

Apart from the education system political parties, their youth organisations and political foundations as well as youth organisations in general play a very important role in the promotion and support of participation in the system of representative democracy. Moreover the Civic Agencies for Political Education at the national and the regional level provide background information on the political system, elections, citizenship etc. targeting in particular at young people ([www.bpb.de](http://www.bpb.de)).

Before elections youth campaigns are organised often aiming in particular at first voters. Material is provided in which the programmes of the political parties are explained in a simple way and are analysed with a focus on youth and youth related topics. Furthermore the Agencies for Civic Education

at the national and/or regional level offer an interactive online election tool (Wahl-O-Mat, [www.wahl-o-mat.de](http://www.wahl-o-mat.de)) where young people can compare their opinions with the programmes of the political parties in a neutral way. The aim is to support their positioning and to encourage them to take part in the elections.

Furthermore the German Federal Parliament runs an online youth forum ([www.mitmischen.de](http://www.mitmischen.de)) that offers young people chats with representatives of the parliament, discussion forums, votes, news and background information on current political topics. At the regional level most parliaments provide a special part for young people on their websites.

Hearing rights i.e. for representatives of youth parliaments and youth councils strengthen the interest of young people in political processes and contribute to a better political understanding and to a better identification with the policy.

The online forum [www.abgeordnetenwatch.de](http://www.abgeordnetenwatch.de) gives citizens the possibility to get into direct contact with their elected deputies on the regional, national and European level. The same applies for candidates running for a mandate at [www.kandidatenwatch.de](http://www.kandidatenwatch.de). Both forums are neutral and non-party political (non-public initiative).

## **6.1 Instruments used to monitor the results of this support.**

N/A

## **6.2 Existing or planned actions aiming at specific groups of young people?**

Yes. The actions aim in particular at pupils and first voters.

## **7 Learn to participate**

### **7.1 Existing actions within the systems of formal education aiming at developing and deepening learning to participate**

As formal education is within the competence of the 16 federal states the actions aiming at developing and deepening the culture of participation differ from region to region and from school to school. Due to these conditions overall information regarding the promotion of participation and engagement in schools is not available. But it can be stated that it largely depends on the commitment and the motivation of the teaching staff.

The participation of pupils and students is seen as integral part of the formal education system. Although school laws differ from federal state to federal state all foresee pupils' councils where pupils participate in the decision-making processes of their school. In this way young people are enabled to learn how to take responsibility and how to assume rights. This form of participation is based on a

decision of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the German federal states from 1968.

The pupils' councils work together on the local and district level and form associations on the regional and national level in order to represent the interests of pupils in education politics on the different political levels.

### **7.1.1 Learning of citizenship**

Participation and citizens' education are closely linked to one another as well as to the openness of the school. This openness can be seen as an "intern openness" aiming at strengthening participation opportunities in school and as an "extern openness" aiming at strengthening the school's cooperation with other partners (enterprises, churches, organisations and associations etc.). Both encourage pupils to get engaged and to participate and thus foster citizens' education. Initiatives of schools to support voluntary activities of pupils i.e. in welfare organisations led to positive experiences.

In Germany formal education aims at

- teaching the ideas of freedom and democracy;
- bringing them up as tolerant people who respect other people and their convictions;
- fostering the belief in international understanding;
- strengthening social commitment and political responsibility and
- enabling young people to assume their own rights and duties.

Concrete actions to realise these aims lay in the hands of the federal states. They are supported by the Agencies on Civic Education which provide information material, simulation games etc but also offer special projects to foster citizenship.

In 2007 the Federal Agencies for Civic focussed on the following working fields:

- right-wing extremism
- migration and integration
- European integration
- Islam/islamism
- Energy

### **7.1.2 Guidelines, teacher training programmes, etc. related to citizens' education but not directly affecting the formal curriculum**

N/A

## **7.2 Existing actions and/or support - of national or regional scope- exist, aiming at promoting learning to participate amongst young people except from formal education**

There are a lot of different kinds of actions promoting a culture of participation among young people. Some examples are:

- Social Volunteer Service/Ecological Volunteer Service (Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr/Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr) gives young people between 16 and 26 the opportunity to commit themselves for a year or longer to a voluntary service in the field of social or ecological affairs, culture or sports. More information: [www.bmfsfj.de/Politikbereiche/Freiwilliges-Engagement/fsj-foej.html](http://www.bmfsfj.de/Politikbereiche/Freiwilliges-Engagement/fsj-foej.html)
- “JUNIOR” (Junge **U**nternehmer initiieren – **o**rganisieren – **r**ealisieren) a project which encourages young people between 15 and 19 to start an own business (Schülerfirma) and to learn about economics, team work and responsibilities in a practical way. In 2007 6214 participants were active in 373 projects. The project is carried in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. More information: [www.juniorprojekt.de](http://www.juniorprojekt.de)
- 72-hours-action “Time for Heroes” in which youth groups, youth centres and youth initiatives in Bavaria showed what young volunteers can achieve in only three days. From 12 to 15 July 2007 more than 40 000 volunteers were active in 1 950 projects. More information: [www.zeitfuerhelden.de](http://www.zeitfuerhelden.de)

## **7.3 Existing or planned actions aiming at certain specific groups of Young people**

Yes. Socially disadvantaged young people (see above).