



YouthPartnership

QUESTIONNAIRE

“PARTICIPATION”

ESTONIA



YouthPartnership
Council of Europe
European Commission



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1 Please explain the context of youth participation in your country

The issues in the sphere of young people are treated by the cultural committee (<http://www.riigikogu.ee/index.php?id=34645>) as the leading committee in the Riigikogu (the Parliament of Estonia, <http://www.riigikogu.ee/?lang=en>). The ministry responsible for the sphere of young people is the Ministry of Education and Research, which plans youth policies and organises youth work. Youth policy and youth work is the responsibility of Department of Youth Affairs (<http://www.hm.ee/index.php?148594>, <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?148553>).

The Youth Work Act provides the legal bases for the organization of youth work. According to the definitions of this Act, a young person is a natural person between 7 and 26 years of age. The Act also defines youth association, youth program and youth project. Provisions regarding the status of a youth associations are important from the standpoint of the structure of youth work. Also the Act provides the responsibilities regarding youth work of the Ministry of Education, of rural municipality or city government councils and county governments.

National Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013 specifies principles, goals and methods in the youth field until year 2013. The strategy emphasizes importance of youth participation in organisation of youth work and youth policies – youth policies are planned and youth work organised for facilitating young people's participation and integration in society. As the result of integrated youth policy, a young person will get the so-called package of experience that contains everything necessary for managing successfully with the challenges, choices and opportunities ahead of him or her, including participation opportunities and experience. One of the principles grounding integrated youth policy is youth participation.

The General Part of the Civil Code Act distinguishes between passive legal capacity and active legal capacity, according which persons shall be guaranteed the status as a subject of law pursuant to their age. Passive legal capacity begins with the live birth of a human being and ends with death. An adult person has active legal capacity. A person who has attained eighteen years of age is adult. A minor between seven and eighteen years of age has restricted active legal capacity. The minor has the right to enter into transactions with the consent of his or her legal representative. A minor under the age of seven is without active legal capacity. Transactions in the name of the minor shall be entered into by his or her legal representative.

Youth participation in electoral politics is regulated by election laws: Riigikogu Election Act, Local Government Election Act, European Parliament Election Act, State Referendum Act, President of the Republic Election Act, and Political Parties Act.

Youth participation in civic society organisations, including youth organisations, is regulated by the Non-profit Associations Act which determines that children and minors can be members of a non-profit association, but they can not be members of the management board of a non-profit association, as the latter requires active legal capacity, which starts at age 18.

Youth Work Act defines youth organisation – youth organisation is a non-profit organisation which has at least 67% of its members younger than 27 years of age, which is active in the field of youth work and which is registered in the register of youth organisations, kept by the Ministry of Education. Youth organisations are entitled to receive annual financial support from national budget. Financial support is decided on case-by-case basis and there is no guaranteed, fixed amount financial support to any particular youth organisation.

At county level, youth councils are mandatory – following the cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Interior, dated December 20, 2005, each county government shall have a youth council to work in cooperation with. Members of the youth councils are either elected or delegated. In 2009, 15 councils were active (refer to section 2.1.2).

In several local governments, local youth councils have been started by young people themselves; the councils are different from those cooperating with county government (refer to section 2.1.3).

Noorsoopoliitika Nõukogu (The Council of Youth Policies) advises the Minister of Education and Research. The Council consists of 6 representatives of youth associations delegated by the Estonian National Youth Council (refer to section 2.1.1), 1 representative of county governments and 1 representative of local municipalities delegated by the Estonian Association of Youth Workers and 3 representatives of national youth institutions (the Ministry of Education and Research, the Estonian Youth Work Centre, Youth in Action Estonian Agency).

Eesti Noorsootöö Keskus /The Estonian Youth Work Centre (EYWC)/ (www.entk.ee) is a national centre for the work with the youth under the authority of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research and its main purpose is to direct and organise youth work as part of the national youth policy.

Target groups of the EYWC are county youth councillors, youth workers of local governments, youth centres, youth organisations and the youth in general. The priority of the EYWC is achieving good administrative capacity in the field of youth work as a whole.

EYWC started its activities in August 1999.

Youth in Action national bureau (euroopa.noored.ee, in Estonian and Russian only) supports financially and organisationally youth projects aimed at increasing civic activism through non-formal learning. The bureau is also actively involved in youth policy processes and youth worker/councillor training.

Political youth organisations do have the capacity of influencing policy processes (refer to section 7).

2. Structures of participation at the local regional or national level

2.1 Youth councils

2.1.1 National youth councils

- Eesti Noorteühenduste Liit /Estonian National Youth Council/ is umbrella organisation of youth organisations, www.enl.ee
- Eesti Õpilasesinduste Liit /Estonian Student Council Union/ is umbrella organisation of high and vocational school students, www.escu.ee
- Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit /Federation of Estonian Student Unions/ is umbrella organisation of college/university students, www.eyl.ee

2.1.2 Regional youth councils

Regional youth councils are organised around county governments:

- Harjumaa Youth Council
- Hiiumaa Youth Council
- Ida-Virumaa Youth Council
- Järvamaa Youth Council
- Jõgevamaa Youth Council
- Läänemaa Youth Council
- Lääne-Virumaa Youth Council
- Pärnumaa Youth Council
- Põlvamaa Youth Council
- Raplamaa Youth Council

- Saaremaa Youth Council
- Tartumaa Youth Council
- Valgamaa Youth Council
- Viljandimaa Youth Council
- Võrumaa Youth Council

2.1.3 Local youth councils

Local youth councils are organised around local governments in towns and boroughs. Relatively few local governments do have acting youth council. Below, acting councils are listed.

- Tallinna linna noortenõukogu /Tallinn City Youth Council
- Tallinna Noortevolikogu / Tallinn Youth Council
- Keila Youth Council
- Kernu borough Youth council
- Nissi borough Youth council
- Viimsi borough Youth council
- Narva Youth Council
- Jõhvi borough Youth Council
- Imavere borough Youth Council
- Haapsalu Youth Council
- Taebala borough Youth Council
- Rakvere Youth Council
- Pärnu Youth Council
- Kuressaare Youth Council
- Tartu Youth Council
- Vara borough Youth Council
- Suure-Jaani borough Youth Council
- Viljandi Youth Council
- Karksi-Nuia borough Youth Council
- Pärsti borough Youth Council
- Rõuge borough Youth Council

2.2 Youth parliaments: Please list youth parliaments on national, regional and local level

National, regional and local youth parliaments

There are no permanently acting and directly elected representative bodies of young people (youth parliaments) in Estonia.

There are several projects which bring together young people on the issues of social and political significance.

Tallinna Noortevolikogu /Tallinn Youth Council/ (<http://www.tudengimaja.ee/index.php?menyy=5>, in Estonian only). Contact person Rome Tikas, chairman of the board, rome.tikas@gmail.com. The council defines itself through the following activities:

- Familiarise young people with principles of democracy,
- Encourage youth civic activism,
- Involve young people in decision-making processes in Tallinn,
- Help organise youth work in Tallinn,
- Represent young people in regional, national and international youth organisations and decision-making,
- Represent interests of peers.

Number of people this represents: its members are elected from (local chapters of) youth organisations, secondary schools and universities in Tallinn, 7 from each organisation.

National session of European Youth Forum, organised by Tegusad Eesti Noored (TEN) /Active Estonian Youth/ (www.ten.ee). The event has taken place already in 9 consecutive years. Representatives to the event are elected by school students. The sessions do not have legal status that would position them to influence political decisions directly. Contact www.ten.ee, info@ten.ee

Regional sessions organised by the TEN. By 2009, more than 20 regional sessions have taken place. Members to the sessions are elected by school pupils of respective regions. The sessions, however, are project-based and do not have legal status which would position them to influence political decisions directly. Contact www.ten.ee, info@ten.ee

'101 children at Toompea', organised jointly by Estonian Union for Child Welfare and Estonian Student Council Union (on top of Toompea hill, Estonian Parliament Riigikogu is located). The event has taken place since 1991. This is not permanently acting representative body but rather once-a-year occurring event.

'Youth Parliament', organised by youth organisation ELO (Eriti Lahe Olemine /Specially Cool Being/) jointly with Scouts, Guides, Estonia 4H, EYMCA and EYWCA Estonia.

3 Participation in representative democracy

3.1 Number and percentage of young people who are members of a political party or political youth organisations, if possible by gender

There are several youth organisations which claim to be followers of a particular political ideology and/or political party.

- Youth organisation closely connected to Centre Party: 5 000
- Youth organisation closely connected to Reform Party: 4 000
- Young Social Democrats: 2 000
- Youth organisation closely connected to Popular Union: 3 000
- Youth organisation closely connected Green Party: 60
- Youth organisation closely connected to ProPartria and ResPublica: 2 100

Altogether approximately 15 000 – 16 000 young people are members of youth chapters of political parties.

3.2 Number and percentage of young people who are members of a trade union

No information available. But trade unions do not have major role in Estonian society and there are no youth chapters of trade unions.

3.3 Percentage of young people (in total and by gender) who are members of a youth non-governmental organisation, which are not trade unions, political parties or political youth organisations.

Estonian Youth Council, which is an umbrella organisation of Estonian youth organisations, counts around 40 000 members, aged 7-26, in their member organisations. EYC has also political youth organisations as its members. Open Republic (www.or.ee), which is not member of Estonian Youth Council, reports 1200 members, mainly Russian-speaking young people. Altogether approximately 41 000 young people are members of youth organisations.

Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit /Federation of Estonian Student Unions/ is an umbrella organisation of higher education institutions (23 institutions of higher education) and represent altogether approximately 63 000 students.

Eesti Õpilasesinduste Liit /Estonian Student Council Union/ is an umbrella organisation of schools (approx. 70% are Estonian general education gymnasiums, 16% are basic schools, 8% vocational education schools and 8% Russian speaking schools). The organisation represents altogether approximately 100 000 school pupils.

Approximately 204 000 young people have connection to youth organisations; strength and nature of organisational affiliation does vary largely.

Altogether, the number of young people having a connection to non-political youth organisations is approximately 190 000.

Total number of people aged 10 to 25, which roughly corresponds to definition of youth in Youth Work Act (age 7-26) and constitutes approximate age brackets for the population that partakes in youth organisations, is 261 784 (as of 01.01.2009; source: Statistical Office).

The percentage of youth in touch with youth organisations is approximately 73%; this number includes also young people who only formally participate in youth organisations.

The percentage of young people more actively involved in non-political youth organisations is approximately 9%. This figure represents young people partaking in activities of youth organisations.

4 Explain the existing support measures, of national, regional or local scope, to promote the participation of young people in local life and follow-up mechanisms

4.1 Financial actions to support the various structures for youth political and NGO participation

The main mechanism for supporting youth participation in decision-making is via organisational, local and regional youth councils. These can be youth councils active in local governments, youth councils at county level, high-school and college student councils, councils of representatives of youth

organisations. The youth councils are consulted on the issues which directly touch aspects of young people living, for instance education and public transport.

Youth organisations receive financial support from national budget, from Gambling Tax Council, and from budgets of local governments.

4.2 Which financial actions on national level aimed at certain specific groups of young people exist?

Programs are developed to support integration of young people with immigrant background. The programs focus on history and culture, modern society including administration and labour market, language and communication skills.

5 The vote

5.1 Is voting obligatory?

No, voting is not obligatory.

5.2 Age of the right to vote

Voting age is 18 years at local, national and European elections.

5.3 Please describe, who is entitled to vote in national, regional and local elections.

Presidential elections

The President of the Republic shall be elected by the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament). If the Riigikogu fails to elect the President of the Republic, an electoral body shall elect the President.

National elections

Estonian citizens who have attained 18 years of age by election day have the right to vote.

A person who has been divested of his or her active legal capacity with regard to the right to vote shall not have the right to vote.

A person who has been convicted of a criminal offence by a court and is imprisoned shall not participate in voting.

Local elections

Estonian citizens and citizens of the European Union who have attained 18 years of age by election day and whose permanent residence, i.e. residence the address details of which have been entered in

the Estonian population register (hereinafter population register), is located in the corresponding rural municipality or city have the right to vote.

An alien has the right to vote if he or she meets the conditions specified above and resides in Estonia on the basis of a long-term residence permit or the right of permanent residence.

A person who has been divested of his or her active legal capacity with regard to the right to vote does not have the right to vote.

A person who has been convicted by a court and is serving a sentence in a custodial institution shall not participate in voting.

Elections to the European Parliament

An Estonian citizen who has attained 18 years of age by election day shall have the right to vote.

A citizen of the European Union who is not an Estonian national (hereinafter citizen of the European Union) shall have the right to vote if:

- 1) he or she has attained 18 years of age by election day;
- 2) his or her permanent residence is in Estonia, i.e. the address details of his or her residence have been entered in the Estonian population register (hereinafter population register);
- 3) he or she has not been deprived of the right to vote in his or her home Member State.

A person shall not have the right to vote if:

- 1) divested of his or her active legal capacity with regard to the right to vote;
- 2) he/she has been convicted of a crime by a court and is serving sentence in a penal institution.

5.4 Requirements for being entitled as a candidate in national, regional or local elections (age, nationality , etc.)

Presidential elections

An Estonian citizen by birth who has attained forty years of age may be nominated as a candidate for President of the Republic.

A person who is serving as President of the Republic for a second consecutive term shall not be nominated as a candidate for President of the Republic.

Parliamentary elections

Estonian citizens who have attained 21 years of age by the last day for the registration of candidates have the right to stand as candidates.

A person who has been divested of his or her active legal capacity with regard to the right to vote shall not have the right to vote.

A person who has been convicted of a criminal offence by a court and is imprisoned shall not stand as a candidate for election to the Riigikogu.

Local elections

Every Estonian citizen and citizen of the European Union who has the right to vote and whose permanent residence is located in the corresponding rural municipality or city not later than on 1 August of an election year has the right to stand as a candidate.

A regular member of the Defence Forces or a person who has been convicted of a criminal offence by a court and is serving a prison sentence shall not stand as a candidate for election to a council.

Elections to the European Parliament

An Estonian citizen who has attained 21 years of age by election day shall have the right to stand as a candidate.

A citizen of the European Union shall have the right to stand as a candidate if:

- 1) he or she has attained 21 years of age by election day;
- 2) his or her permanent residence is in Estonia, i.e. the address details of his or her residence have been entered in the population register;
- 3) he or she has not been deprived of the right to vote in his or her home Member State.

The following shall not stand as candidates in elections to the European Parliament:

- 1) a person who has been divested of his or her active legal capacity with regard to the right to vote;
- 2) a person who has been convicted of a crime by a court and is serving sentence in a penal institution;
- 3) regular members of the Defence Forces.

No person may vote or stand as a candidate in more than one Member State of the European Union in the same election to the European Parliament.

6. The elections

6.1 Indicators of participation related to the election of the European Parliament

6.1.1 In the election of the European Parliament, the number and percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people who have the right to vote (in total and by gender)

No information available

6.1.2 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the total population voting

No information available

6.2 National indicators of participation in the polls

6.2.1 In national elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people who have the right to vote (in total, by gender and by age groups)

Results from an opinion survey conducted in March 2007 right after parliamentary elections, reported the following voting percentages in age groups:

	18-25 yrs	26-30 yrs	31-35 yrs	36+ yrs
voted	64%	64%	70%	80%

6.2.2 In national elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the total population who has voted.

In the section 6.2.1. (above) one can see that participation rates of young people were lower than those older than 36 years. Participation rate of 18-30 year olds was 80% of those aged 36+, and participation rate of 31-35 year olds was 88% of those aged 36+.

6.3 Regional and local indicators of participation in the polls

6.3.1 In regional and local elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of young people who have the right to vote

No data available.

6.3.2 In regional and local elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the total population voting

No data available

6.4 Number of young people elected at the national, regional and local level: overall and by gender (please specify the age range)

According to Estonian Youth Work Act, people aged 7-26 are young people.

Estonian Parliament Riigikogu consists of 101 members.

	Men	Women
Younger than 27	1 (one MP turned 27 in 2009)	0
Younger than 30 and older than 26	0 (one MP turned 30 in 2009)	1

7. List actions, programmes, and financial or social support that promote the participation in the system of representative democracy, in particular to young people under the age of 30?

- How are the results of this support monitored?
- Do some of the existing or planned actions aim at specific groups of young people

There are no national programmes for those intending to start political career. Youth social, political and civic activism is supported and encouraged in various ways through giving financial and organisational support to youth organisations and youth council at national, local and organisational levels. Also other measures of youth work support development of social and political activity of young people: counselling services, training of young people and training of trainers, hobby education and other opportunities of non-formal learning.

Young people intending career in local, national or international politics or in state or local administration are socialised in political youth organisations and political parties. Political parties are well established and powerful institutions in Estonian public sphere.

8. Learning to participate

8.1 Please list existing actions and mechanisms within the systems of formal education aiming at developing and deepening learning to participate (citizens' education). Please also list related guidelines and teacher training programmes aiming at integrating citizen's education into the curriculum.

Teachers are encouraged to create and support discussion in the classroom and to use various pedagogical methods that support developing activism of young people.

8.2 In which fields, other than formal education, do actions and/or support - of national or regional scope- exist, which aim at promoting learning to participate amongst young people? What is the nature of these actions/this support? Give examples of good practice.

TEN holds regional sessions of youth parliaments. The sessions as institutions embody also procedure of setting up candidates and running for the post of being elected to be a participant in a particular session.

In 2009, Estonian Youth Council organised shadow elections before local elections. Pupils in two towns – in Tallinn and in Tartu – could vote for the same lists of candidates that were registered for local elections.

8.3 Do some of the existing or planned actions aim at certain specific groups of young people?

There are no special programs for particular groups.