



YouthPartnership

QUESTIONNAIRE

„PARTICIPATION“

GREECE



YouthPartnership
Council of Europe
European Commission



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1. Please explain the context of youth participation in your country (legislation, structures)

Legislation

Currently, there is no law establishing a minimum participation level of young people within state bodies.

In view of empowering young people's active participation at a local level the General Secretariat for Youth, in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Interior, have founded, under the law 3443/2006, the Local Youth Councils.

In addition, the Greek Ministry of Education in order to develop and deepen learning to participate has introduced civic education modules in elementary and secondary schools as part of national curriculum. Civic education modules are linked with cross-curricular activities and subject-specific themes, with emphasis on democratic citizenship, introduction to law and political institutions, ancient Greek literature, history of the social sciences, European civilisation and its roots, and sociology.

Structures

In Greece, there is a wide range of participation possibilities which have to do with active and representative participation:

- School Councils operating in all secondary schools. There is a central council of 15 members representing each school, as well as a five-member council representing each class.
- A Youth Parliament (www.vouliefivon.gr), an educational programme initiated by the Greek Parliament and organised on annual basis in cooperation with the Ministries of Education of Greece and Cyprus and the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection.
- Two major Student Unions: The Hellenic Federation of University Students (E.F.E.E) and the Hellenic Federation of Technological Institutions Students (E.S.E.E).
- A National Youth Council (www.esyn.gr) (ESYN) was established in July 1998 as a 'platform' of NGOs and is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit federation of Greek youth organisations.
- The Local Youth Councils
- Political Party Youth Organisations: Most of the Greek Political Parties have their own youth organisations that are active throughout Greece and in a variety of social contexts.
- Foundation of the Young Scientists Network, an initiative of the National Youth Council, with the support of the General Secretariat for Youth. The Young Scientists Network is a structure which promotes the organised participation of young people; its main objective is to highlight

the role and importance of the research and scientific work of the young people and to cope with their problems. To this effect, the network:

- Organises international meetings-congresses addressed to young scientists and researchers.
 - Supports the operation of an on-line community of young Greek scientists and researchers.
 - Conducts research in relation to the needs of the young Greek scientists and researchers.
 - Facilitates the contact and collaboration between young scientists and researchers from Greece and abroad.
- Young people's participation in a wide range of non-governmental youth organisations, most of which are members of the National Youth Council.

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

2.1 Youth councils

2.1.1 National youth councils

The National Youth Council was established in July 1998, as a "platform" of NGYOs and is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit federation of Greek youth organizations. Today, 47 NGYOs constitute the National Youth Council, representing the vast majority of young people.

The National Youth Council is the official representative of Greek youth abroad and the main interlocutor of the Hellenic Government on youth issues at national level. It participates in the Organizational committee for the Youth Parliament, while it is a member of the European Youth Forum, the Mediterranean Youth Forum, the UNESCO Youth Council, the relevant U.N. Youth Bodies, etc.

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2.1.2 Regional youth councils

N/A

2.1.3 Local youth councils

The Local Youth Councils are an institutionalised initiative of the General Secretariat for Youth, the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Interior.

The municipal councils of all municipalities in Greece bear full responsibility for the implementation of this institution. In every Municipality, registers of members are kept, that consist of young people, aged 15 to 28, providing them the opportunity to participate in collective actions and familiarize them with the principles of democracy. Till now, this is a fact for the 95% of the municipalities and communities of the country, in which more than 100,000 members are registered, in around 870 Registers of Members. The aim is to give the chance to all young people, especially to those belonging to the group of young people with fewer opportunities, to express their concerns and be active in their community.

Every two years, elections take place among the young people registered, to form the Council of the Local Youth Councils which is responsible for:

- detecting, highlighting and monitoring the youth needs and problems in local level,
- undertaking initiative and activities, in cooperation with the relative Local Administration Organisation, which aim at the free development of the personality of young people,
- taking care that measures are taken for the active and effective participation of young people in the local society and
- developing cooperation relations with relative Local Youth Councils in national and European level.

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

Parliament of Youth

The “contact person” should be the president of the youth parliament

www.vouliefivon.gr/

The “role” is the role of the parliament in decision making:

- To cultivate the young people’s interest in the public affairs.
- To help them shape a responsible citizen's conscience.
- To familiarise young people with the practices and difficulties of Democracy and the parliamentary institutions.

The “number of people this represents” is the number of those young people who are represented by the parliament. From the constitution of the youth parliament it should be visible, who is represented by the youth parliament. However, most likely this will be all young people of the local community.:

The Youth Parliament consists of 362 members (312 from Greece, 25 from Cyprus and 25 from Greek schools abroad).

Election modalities (who votes, how, duration of mandate):

The session is carried out every fall in Athens, in the Hellenic Parliament. The youth deputies are invited and hosted for 4 days in Athens by the Hellenic Parliament Foundation. The Chairman of the Parliament chairs the Session. The President of the Democracy, the Prime Minister, ministers and MPs are attending the meetings. The committees of the Parliament of Youth are chaired by MPs.

The session is an exercise in political thought and reasoning for the deputies.

Youth deputies participate in the following committees:

- Educational Affairs
- National Defence and External Affairs.
- Finance, Production & Trade Affairs.
- Social Affairs.
- Public Administration and Justice.
- Discussions in the committees are based on the "synthesis" of the opinions of students, created during the evaluation process. The synthesis includes the topics of interest and points of view of the students who participated in the programme.

Last year’s session

Parliament of Youth deputies addressed many subjects during last year's session. Most popular among them were:

- Relations of young persons with their family and school.
- Problems of the educational system.
- Equality of sexes.
- Military service.
- Juvenile delinquency.

- Drug use and distribution.
- Treatment of persons with inability.
- Problems of the Hellenic countryside.
- Deterioration of the natural and human environment.
- The issue of the name of F.Y.R.O.M.
- Hellenic-Turkish relations.

As every year, a fertile dialogue was carried out and many, often contradicting, opinions were heard.

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

According to a study conducted by the University of Athens and ALCO Company for the General Secretariat for Youth, in 2005, young people participate in student/pupil parties and political parties by 9,1%.

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

According to a study conducted by the University of Athens and ALCO Company for the General Secretariat for Youth, in 2005, young people are members of a trade union by 2,3%.

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. If possible give information about the type of organisations.

According to a study conducted by the University of Athens and ALCO Company for the General Secretariat for Youth, in 2005, young people participate in youth non-governmental organisations that have to do with cultural issues by 11,2%, religious issues by 2,8%, sport issues by 19,8%, volunteering issues by 4,7% and scientific issues by 2,6%.

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

One of the main political goals of the General Secretariat for Youth is to support the various structures for youth political and NGO participation. More specifically, with an open invitation to the public, interested organizations and groups are regularly invited to submit their proposals for any kind of youth activities. After an evaluation of these proposals, a great number of plans proposed by and addressed to young people are being financed throughout Greece. Similar procedures of financing organisations and youth initiatives are in place in other Ministries and governmental agencies. Also, the General Secretariat for Youth finances annually the National Youth Council and the Local Youth Councils in order to undertake actions and project and participate in seminars and conferences.

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

There are different partners involved in special actions for certain groups in Greece. The General Secretariat for Youth undertakes programmes, actions and projects for people with fewer opportunities and / or disabled young people in collaboration with Associations, Special Schools, training centres etc, such as: creativity leisure programmes, art workshops, environmental Education for all programmes etc. Additionally, it provides entrepreneurial information through the Youth Entrepreneurship Support Structures and the Youth Entrepreneurship Observatory as well as information on children's rights through the Children's Rights Observatory. At the same time, the General Secretariat for Youth supports and finances Youth Non Governmental Organisations to implement projects and programmes target on specific groups. The Institute for Youth undertakes initiatives under the Youth in Action EU Programme emphasizing at young people with fewer opportunities. The Hellenic Organization of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and Handicraft S.A. (EOMMEX S.A.) undertakes entrepreneurial programmes for young people and women. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the Ministry of Interior undertake programmes relating to equality of genders and immigrants. The main thrust of the National Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) is preventing and combating social exclusion, with a view to integrating the most vulnerable population groups in the labour market. OAED programmes focus on the following population groups:

- People with disabilities.
- Drug dependent people.
- People trying to overcome addiction or having completed their rehabilitation.
- Ex-prisoners / Juvenile delinquents.
- People with linguistic, cultural or other special needs, such as ROMA (gypsies), Pomaks, etc.

- Former expatriates.
- Refugees.
- Immigrants.
- Lone parent families (mainly women).

The aforementioned groups require special care. They need support and must be integrated/reintegrated in the labour market. They also need to maintain their jobs, in order to break effectively the vicious circle of “Poverty - Unemployment – Social diversification”.

OAED’s programmes have to do with training, creating new jobs, exploiting people’s potential, according to individual needs, skills and preferences, supporting self-employment, providing employment and giving subsidies to companies for the creation of new jobs (for a 24-month period) and to new entrepreneurs. Indicatively, we quote the following programmes:

- Programme for the subsidy of new working positions and new free-lancers for people of vulnerable social groups
- Special Programme for the promotion into employment of young unemployed

5. The vote

5.1 Is voting obligatory?

Yes for all elections, but there are no sanctions if otherwise.

5.2 Age of the right to vote

From 18 years old.

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

All Greek citizens are entitled to vote provided:

- They are aged over 18.
- They are registered in an electoral roll of some municipality or community in Greece.
- They have not been deprived of their voting rights.

The following people are not entitled to vote:

- People who pursuant to the provisions of the Hellenic Civil Code have been fully deprived of their right to exercise their civil rights on their own.
- All those people so deprived by virtue of an irrevocable criminal sentence for one of the crimes cited in the Penal and Military Penal Code for such time as that deprivation persists.

In particular, according to the Greek Constitution, Article 51, “the law cannot abridge the right to vote except in cases where a minimum age has not been attained or in cases of legal incapacity or as a result of irrevocable criminal conviction for certain felonies”.

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

According to Article 55 of the Greek Constitution, “to be elected as a Member of Parliament, one must be a Greek citizen, have the legal capacity to vote and have attained the age of twenty-five years on the day of the election”.

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)

You want to proceed with section 6.4 if the country of your review is not a member state of the European Union.

N/A

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

N/A

6.2 National indicators of participation in the polls

Regarding national elections, please use only the last election that has taken place.

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)

N/A

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

N/A

6.3 Regional and local indicators of participation in the polls

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

Number of young women and young men (under the age of 30) who are member of the national parliament.

N/A

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

Are there actions, programmes or is there support for young people who are interested in participating to that system? For example: Is there special support for young people who are candidates in the elections?

In Greece, there are, as mentioned above, two major Programmes promoting participation in the system of representative democracy for young people under 30 years old. These are the School Councils operating in all secondary schools and the Local Youth Councils operating in most of the municipalities and communities of the country. The first do not receive any financial support whereas the latter are financed by the General Secretariat for Youth and the Ministry of Interior. Both of them are initiatives aiming at enhancing participation of young people in representative democracy and teaching them its principles. In respect of providing special support to specific groups of young people, we should mention our strong belief that all young people are equal and we do not wish to make any discrimination and categorise young people in specific groups.

8. Learning to participate

The following section is about the activities that promote active participation to young people in formal and [non-formal education](#).

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 citizens' education into the curriculum.

Civic education modules are linked with cross-curricular activities and subject-specific themes at primary and upper secondary educational levels, with emphasis on democratic citizenship, introduction to law and political institutions, ancient Greek literature, history of the social sciences, European civilisation and its roots and sociology. More specifically, the Greek Ministry of Education in order to develop and deepen learning to participate has introduced civic education modules in elementary and secondary schools as part of national curriculum. Civic education modules are linked with cross-curricular activities and subject-specific themes, with emphasis on democratic citizenship, introduction to law and political institutions, ancient Greek literature, history of the social sciences, European civilisation and its roots, and sociology. To give some examples, the module 'European Civilisation and its Roots', taught at the first grade of secondary education (upper level), examines the history and evolution of Europe and its distinct social and political formations. Moreover, at the second grade of secondary education (upper level), there exists a module under the title 'Introduction to Law and Political Institutions', which brings together the disciplines of law and political science, focusing on the nature of politics and the role of political science, the theory and practice of active citizenship, elements of democratic government, the legal and political system of the European Union, the Greek political and judicial system, etc. In addition, at the third grade of lower level secondary education, students engage themselves in the study of forms of citizenship, the organisation of social institutions and social groups, the democratic process and the Constitution, etc. In the same respect, the Ministry of National Education organised a series of events in order to foster and support the active and continuous participation of schools and other educational institutions in initiatives linked with the development of democratic citizenship.

In 1996 the Ministry for National Education and Religious Affairs (YPEPTH) laid the foundations of a system designed to meet the educational needs of social groups with a particular social, cultural or religious identity. The Ministry adopted cross-cultural education - a new form of education in Greece - as part of this policy. The aim of cross-curriculum education is to set up and run primary and secondary classes that provide education to young people with a specific educational, social or cultural identity. In cross-cultural schools, the standard curriculum is adapted to meet the specific educational, social or cultural needs

of the students attending them. A total of 26 cross-cultural schools have been set up throughout Greece since 1996. These schools, which will continue to increase in number, guarantee equality of opportunity to every student in the country, while these cutting-edge approaches to teaching and learning have a positive knock-on effect on the Greek educational system as a whole. Out of the 26 schools, 13 are primary schools, while there are 9 junior high schools and 4 senior high schools. A school can only be described as cross-cultural when repatriated Greek and/or foreign students account for at least 45% of the total student body. The educators in these schools receive special training, and are selected on the basis of their knowledge on the subject of cross-cultural education and teaching Greek as a second or foreign language.

Also, in 1996, the Greek government passed a law on intercultural education (Law 2413/1996).

The Special Education Department (www.dea.gr) of the Ministry of Education has implemented a database that permits communication between Special Education School Units (SMEA) and the Data Bank for Special Education, with a view of supporting teachers and further promoting the act of imparting knowledge. The Department aims at:

- Giving school the opportunity to “open up” to the wider society of information worldwide through Internet.
 - Laying down the conditions for the exploitation of new programmes developed for the education of children with special needs.
 - Ensuring communication between teachers and pupils, thus motivating them to adopt methods of school integration.
 - Enabling school communities to communicate with local administration bodies, which develop extra-curricular activities.
 - Stimulating teachers to modernise the methods used to approach pupils and to develop new education curricula harmonised with those applied worldwide.
 - Encouraging teachers to use computers, by providing them access to research and in-service training courses, through Internet training links (ex. TESS network, SOCRATES, etc).
- during the school year, various teacher training seminars are carried out for the enhancement of their teaching abilities and skills and updating them in educational issues.

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 practise.

The General Secretariat for Youth and the Institute for Youth run various programmes and projects aiming at the promotion of learning to participate amongst young people. These programmes and projects are also based on the principle of volunteerism that helps young people acquire more skills and competences through which they develop their personality and learn how to think and work as a team. Such projects are also run by the National Youth Council and the Local Youth Councils. In addition, all these bodies are responsible for the implementation of European Programmes, such as Youth in Action, Progress, Socrates, Leonardo etc.

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

Examples of specific groups: young leaders or socially disadvantaged young people

The General Secretariat for Youth has the ambition of creating a communication network with young people from all over the country, emphasising in the promotion of participation in public life as well as in reassuring the participation of young people with fewer opportunities including young people with disabilities. Special emphasis has been given in the promotion of the Principle of Equality between young men and young women. Nevertheless, we should mention that we have a principle in the implementation of our programmes, namely not to put young people in specific groups and categories.

9. Describe other, informal ways young people choose to participate in your country.