



**Youth**Partnership

# ***QUESTIONNAIRE***

# ***“PARTICIPATION”***

# ***TURKEY***



**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 Please explain the context of youth participation in your country**

In Turkey the age of right to vote is 18 and the age of right to be elected is 25

Moreover, according to the Associations Regulation numbered 5252 and dated 4/11/2004:

- Every citizen at the age of 18 and over has the right to be a member of and to establish NGOs.
- Young people at the age of 15-18 have the right to be a member of and to establish non-governmental children associations while the ones between 12-15 have only the right to be a member.

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

### **2.1 Youth councils**

#### **2.1.1 National youth councils**

There is no national youth council in Turkey.

The Regulation on Student Councils and on the National Student Council of Higher Education Institutions coming into force in 2005 contains rules regarding the establishment of Students Councils of Higher Education Institutions in order to facilitate the students to forward their expectations and wishes to administrative bodies, to give them the opportunity to take part in decision making process about education-training, to have the students represented on national and international level. In the frame of these regulations, students' councils have been created in the universities and on national level.

#### **2.1.2 Regional youth councils**

See 2.1.1

#### **2.1.3 Local youth councils**

Municipalities Law (2005) and the City Administrative Law - City Council Regulations (2006) are related with the regional and local legislations on youth. The establishment of youth councils in each municipality became a legal obligation thanks to the City Council Regulations prepared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs which secure legal base for youth councils and constitutionally protect youth activities. It defines councils and working groups, including youth councils, as joint structures having an active role in the administration of the Municipality on a voluntary base.

### **2.2 Youth parliaments**

Youth for Habitat Turkey National Youth Parliament was founded in May 2004 and 297 delegates from 75 cities participated to its works. Yet, it is not considered as a legal national parliament.

([www.youthforhab.org.tr](http://www.youthforhab.org.tr))

### **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**

The *State of Youth Survey* which was conducted for the National Human Development Report among more than 3,000 young people, showed that the rate of youth who are currently active in a political party is 4.7%. ([www.undp.org.tr](http://www.undp.org.tr))

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

Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK) was founded in Istanbul on February 13, 1967. Today with 17 affiliated trade UNIONS and around 407.684 members, DiSK defends the interests of working class in all platforms and struggles for new gains under the guidance of the principles gained from the history. However it is not possible to distinguish the young members of DISK. In 2007, Youth Union (Genc-Sen) was founded under the umbrella of DISK, but still the number and the percentage of young people are not available.

#### **3.3 Percentage of young people who are members of a youth non-governmental organisation, which are not trade unions, political parties or political youth organisations.**

Among those who participated in the *State of Youth Survey* the rate of young people who are members of a non-governmental organization is only 4% in Turkey. About 46% of these are either university students or graduates. ([www.undp.org.tr](http://www.undp.org.tr))

### **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**

NGOs have the possibility to implement joint projects with the state institutions. They may get from the state institutions financial support amounting to 50% of their project expenses. Moreover, they may

apply for EU and international funds. The youth clubs registered to Directorate General Youth and Sports are given financial support for their youth activities by the Directorate.

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

National campaign for literacy of girls by the Ministry of National Education in cooperation with UNICEF is continuing.

In cooperation with local governments and NGOs, the The Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) Administration is carrying out activities for improving social infrastructure and ensuring the active participation of women, young people and children to social development efforts.

The General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection is carrying out a rehabilitation project for disadvantaged young people (young women who are neither in school nor seeking jobs, the physically handicapped, juvenile delinquents, and street children).

### **5 The vote**

#### **5.1 Is voting obligatory?**

Yes.

#### **5.2 Age of the right to vote**

18

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

All Turkish citizens over 18 years of age have the right to vote in elections and to take part in referenda. The exercise of these rights is regulated by law. Privates and corporals serving in the armed services, students in military schools, and convicts in penal execution, excluding those convicted of negligent offences, cannot vote.

#### **5.4 Requirements for being entitled as a candidate in national, regional or local elections**

Citizens have the right to form political parties and to join and withdraw from them, in accordance with the established procedure,. One must be over 18 years old to become a member of a party and to vote. Every Turk over the age of 25 is eligible to be a deputy.

They shall not be elected deputies persons who:

- have not completed their primary education

- have been deprived of legal capacity
- have failed to perform compulsory military service
- are banned from public service
- have been sentenced to a prison term totalling one year or more (excluding involuntary offences) or to a heavy imprisonment;
- who have been convicted for dishonourable offences such as embezzlement, corruption, bribery, theft, fraud, forgery, breach of trust, fraudulent bankruptcy;
- are convicted of smuggling, conspiracy in official bidding or purchasing, offences related to the disclosure of state secrets, involvement in acts of terrorism or incitement and encouragement of such activities.

## **6. The elections**

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

N/A

### **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)**

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**

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?**

The elective age to Parliament has been reduced to 25 in 2006 which brings up an effective support in promoting the participation of youth in the system of representative democracy. Political parties have youth organisations as well and besides, according to the compliance with EU, establishment of youth councils in each municipality became a legal obligation, efforts for the establishment of a National Youth Parliament continue and the General Directorate of Youth and Sports endeavours for promoting the participation of young people in the social life via the youth centres. Children and young people are participating as delegates in local, regional, national or international summits, councils or conferences.

## **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).**

The National Basic Education Law no. 1739 defines the principles governing the training of individuals, the implementation of education rights, the provision of equality of opportunity in education and in participation to the organization of democracy and secular education. In the context of this National Law, democracy and civil education has been included in the school programs either as multidisciplinary or independent courses aimed at ensuring that students adopt and acquire a democratic thinking. In order to raise civil awareness in and teach democratic behaviour to students and to ensure that they have their freedom, are aware of and protect their own and others' rights, 7.-8. classes schedules of primary schools include one hour of "Civil and Human Rights Education" course and 3. class schedule of high schools include elective "Democracy and Human Rights" course. In these courses students are:

- taught to respect the human rights mentioned in the Constitution and the Basic Law of National Education
- trained as individuals who adopt the Republican order and apply and protect human rights and democracy principles in their daily lives
- taught their own rights and liberties, made aware of and taught to protect their own rights and the rights of everyone in society
- taught to be participatory, responsible and respectful to human beings and human honour
- trained as individuals and citizens who are at peace with the community and the world and who are familiar with the values of modern civilization.

Moreover, the Learning Schools Project ensures participation of teachers and students in the program development and Text book preparation efforts. The Project is aimed at emphasizing the principle of "student-centered education" and make the "schools' knowledge production centres" and classrooms a democratic environment where knowledge is generated.

Ministry of National Education aims to enable the participation of students in social and cultural activities organized in the schools, to provide guidance services for students and to bring solutions to the problems of the schools as well as to those of the students. Classroom and/or school representatives are selected and they participate to school councils which operate as participatory democracy mechanisms.

"Citizenship Education Project" which aims to reinforce a culture of human rights and democracy, is executed by the related project group established in the Ministry of National Education. The goals of the project are:

- To train effective, responsible, participative and free individuals for the decision-making processes in social life
- To develop awareness of democratic citizenship
- To reinforce a culture of human rights and democracy
- To implement the principle of commitment to legal rules, justice and equality in a world of differences
- To produce creative, non violent, participative and peaceful solutions for social problems
- To maintain education in democratic citizenship in order to provide adolescents and adults with the opportunity to determine their own future
- To work in cooperation with civil social organizations and experts.



**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?**

Youth Services Department in the General Directorate of Youth and Sports (GSGM) manages Youth Centres and organizes Youth camps, cultural activities and the Youth week. There are many activities among these which aim at promoting learning to participate. For example, Youth Centers offer courses on different topics such as participation, youth leadership, human rights, citizenship, etc and implements activities focusing on these topics on local level.

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

There are national campaigns for the development and education of girls, especially in the rural and eastern part of Turkey. UNICEF and Ministry of National Education is holding a campaign, called “Go Girls”. Besides, there is an attempt to care and educate the children and youngsters who need special care. Many NGOs and public institutions are working hard to protect the children working and living in the streets.