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

INFORMATION SHEET PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

CYPRUS



Last updated: 15 March 2011

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1. Youth participation in Cyprus

Give an overview on participation of young people (13 – 30) in your country on the national and regional level (in federal states) answering the following questions:

- Are there official national/regional recommendations (policies) establishing the right of young people to participate in society? **YES**

- I. The Youth Board of Cyprus Law, 33(I)/1994¹.
- II. Review of the Cyprus Youth Policy – Cyprus National Report, 2005².

- If so: how is the concept of youth participation defined?

- I. The Youth Board of Cyprus Law: Chapter 6. Youth Board of Cyprus objectives: “The Youth Board plays in big part an advisory role, but it also realizes programs concerning the youth field after an approval by the Board of Ministers. As an advisory body, the Administrative Board of the Youth Board of Cyprus submits recommendations in relation with the drafting of a complete youth policy aiming to achieve its objectives. These are the following: a) The progress and welfare of all young people of Cyprus, regardless of national origin or religion, b) The granting of equal opportunities to all the young people and the relevant organizations for participation and assumption of responsibility in the social, economic and cultural development and progress of their community and the country in general”
- II. Review of the Cyprus Youth Policy – Cyprus National Report: Chapter 5. Definition: “Based on the White Paper of EU (2001) Active Participation means ensuring that young people are consulted and more involved in the decisions which concerns them and, in general, the life of their communities”.

- What are the measures envisaged to promote different forms of participation on local, regional and national level?

- I. Funding of youth NGO's.
- II. The “Youth in Action” program.
- III. Information towards participation, via the Youth Information Centers.
- IV. Organizing various youth events, throughout the year.
- V. The Structured Dialogue, between the Youth Board of Cyprus, other public authorities, young people and youth organizations.

- Do any of the above mentioned measures target specific groups? (please tick)

- females
- males
- migrants
- young people with fewer opportunities
- young people in specific regions
- minorities (which): Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, Latins, Armenians
- certain age groups within the age range 13-30 (which):
- other:

¹ <http://www.youthboard.org.cy/nomosonek.pdf>

² http://www.youthboard.org.cy/youth_policy.shtm

2. Youth participation in representative democracy in Cyprus

Please describe the rules of representative democracy related to young people answering the questions below:

- Is voting compulsory in your country? **YES**
- What is the legal minimum age to vote in elections?

European ³ :	18	National: ⁴	18	Regional:	N/A	Local:	18
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- What are the legal requirements for voting in local, regional, national and European elections?

People, who have Cypriot citizenship, are at least 18 years old and have their permanent residence in Cyprus for the last 6 months, have the right to vote⁵.

- What are the legal requirements for being a candidate in elections?

European elections: 25 years old, white record and mental faculty.

Presidential elections: 35 years old, white record and mental faculty.

National (Parliamentary) elections: 25 years old, white record and mental faculty.

Local (Municipal) elections: 25 years old, white record and mental faculty.

2.1. Participation in elections

Please give the percentage of young voters (young people who are allowed to vote below 30 years old) on European (for EU-countries only) and national level. If detailed data on young people is not available please provide the general turnout of all voters and describe the young voter's participation

	Participation in European elections in % of people with the right to vote			Participation in national elections in % of people with the right to vote		
	Total	female	male	total	female	male
% of total population	59,4% ⁶	57,3%	61,5%	89% ⁷	87,8%	91,5%
18 – 30 year olds	50,2%	48,4%	51%	85,3%	84%	87,1%
18 – 24 year olds ⁸	45,2%	44,3%	45,9%	79%	77,6%	80,9%
25 – 30 year olds	52,8%	52%	53,7%	86%	84,8%	87,6%
% of total population	59,4% ⁹	57,3%	61,5%	89% ¹⁰	87,8%	91,5%

³ If applicable

⁴ <http://www.parliament.cy/parliamenteng/index.htm>

⁵ <http://moi.gov.cy/>

⁶ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/elections2009/en/cyprus_en_txt.html#ancre5

⁷ http://www.parliament.cy/parliamentgr/002_10_11.htm

⁸ If applicable

⁹ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/elections2009/en/cyprus_en_txt.html#ancre5

2.2. Young people elected into representative bodies

Please provide the number (in total and by gender) of young people under the age of 30 who are members of the national parliament. Please provide the total number of parliamentarians on national level.

	MP ≥ 30		All MP	
Women	0	0%	7	12,5%
Men	0	0%	49	87,5%
Total	0	0%	56	100% ¹¹

¹⁰ http://www.parliament.cy/parliamentgr/002_10_11.htm

¹¹ www.parliament.cy

3. Youth participation in civil society

3.1. Membership in NGOs

Please give the percentage of young people aged 13 to 30 (if possible in total and gender) who are members in non-governmental organizations (including political and youth NGOs) and if possible for youth NGOs. Please provide the same data for political parties as well. For comparison, please provide the same data for the whole population.

	NGOs, including political NGOs and youth NGOs			Youth NGOs			Political parties		
	Total	female	male	Total	female	male	total	female	male
% of total population	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
13 – 30 year olds	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
16 – 19 year olds	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
20 – 24 year olds	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
25 – 30 year olds	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

3.2. Youth participation structures on local, regional or national level

Please give a picture of how young people can/do participate in formally recognized ways in civic society/policy in your country by answering to the following questions:

- which types of **youth participation structures** exist in your country and which group of young people these structure do represent
1. Municipal Youth Councils: there are 15 Municipal Youth Councils today, out of 33 Municipalities¹². The Municipal Youth Councils are advisory bodies for their Municipalities on youth affairs. In each Municipal (or Communal) Youth Council participate representatives of all the local youth NGO's.
 2. Pupil Councils: in each secondary education school, pupils elect every year their Pupil Council, which acts as their representative body. Prior to the election of the School's Pupil Council, pupils of each class elect their own council and the elected representatives of all classes vote for the school's Council. After this, all Pupil Councils of the same region elect the Regional Pupil Council and at the end the representatives of all 5 Regional Pupil Councils elect the Pancyprian Coordinative Pupils Committee (PSEM).
 3. Student Unions: a similar procedure is followed by students too. The difference though is the fact that in Universities' elections students vote for the several student organizations and the representatives of each organization participate in the University's Student Union. The representatives of the Union participate also in the University's Council. All Student Unions of the Universities of Cyprus and the Universities abroad (where Cypriot students have founded Student Unions) are the members of the Pancyprian Federation of Student Unions

¹² <http://www.ucm.org.cy/index.aspx>

(POFEN¹³), the highest coordinating students committee. POFEN's role is recognized by the State.

4. Children's Parliament: It is an annual session of representatives of High School Pupils, with the support of the President of the Parliament. During this session, the Pupils' representatives, symbolically occupy the seats of the members of the Parliament and discuss all the issues they are concerned. After the session, the outcome of the discussions, both at the Plenary and at the Working Groups, is forwarded to all appropriate Authorities accordingly in order to inform them or take the necessary measures. For the moment, the role of the Children's Parliament remains purely advisory.
5. Youth Clubs: Youth Clubs are Community Organizations with voluntary establishment aiming at the progress and well being of the youth of their local community, the involvement and responsible participation in the cultural and social development of their community, the good use of young people's leisure time and the channeling of their energy creatively, the development of environmental awareness among the young people etc. All Youth Clubs of the same region form the Regional Youth Clubs Committee and all 5 Regional Committees are members of the Cyprus Youth Clubs Organization (KOKEN)¹⁴.

¹³ <http://pofen.org.cy/>

¹⁴ <http://www.cyco.org.cy>

- *what is the degree of participation to decision making allowed by these structures (please fill in the table below):*

Type of youth participation structure	% of local structures			% of regional structures			% of national structures		
Municipal Youth Councils	100%			---			---		
	Share of power	Consultation	Information	Share of power	Consultation	Information	Share of power	Consultation	Information
		100%		---	---	---	---	---	---
Pupil Councils	80%			15%			5%		
	Share of power	Consultation	Information	Share of power	Consultation	Information	Share of power	Consultation	Information
	30%	30%	40%	0%	30%	70%	10%	30%	60%
Student Unions	80%			---			20%		
	Share of power	Consultation	Information	Share of power	Consultation	Information	Share of power	Consultation	Information
	30%	30%	40%	---	---	---	20%	30%	50%
Children's Parliament	---			---			100%		
	Share of power	Consultation	Information	Share of power	Consultation	Information	Share of power	Consultation	Information
	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	100%	---
Youth Clubs	80%			15%			5%		
	Share of power	Consultation	Information	Share of power	Consultation	Information	Share of power	Consultation	Information
	0%	30%	70%	10%	40%	50%	15%	40%	45%

4. Learning to participate

4.1 The formal education system

Please describe existing mechanisms within the system of formal education aiming at developing and deepening learning to participate in your country.

- I. “Active citizenship” Program¹⁵: It is a lesson included in the curriculum of the 3rd and 6th year of the Secondary Education, aiming to get pupils in touch with the senses of democracy, freedom, justice, equality, human rights, constitution, political systems, active citizenship and participation.
- II. School Clubs: School Clubs operate 3-4 times per year. Pupils participate in them voluntarily and are separated in various thematic groups: sports, arts, environment, music/dance, technology, games etc. It is actually the first step of participation of young people in a structure separated from the rest of the educational system.
- III. Children’s Parliament: It was established in 2000. An annual session of representatives of High School Students from all over Cyprus, with the support of the President of the Parliament, during which a group of children occupies symbolically the seats of the members of our Parliament (see more details in par. 3.2 above).

Are there teacher trainings programs at the national and/or regional level on this topic?

Unfortunately, there aren’t any national teacher training programs on participation.

4.2 Non formal education

Please describe five to ten existing examples of actions/programs/activities at national or regional level, outside the formal education system, aiming at developing and deepening learning to participate in your country.

- I. “Youth Initiatives” Project: It is a national funding program that offers young people the chance for mobility and active participation in the cultural, political and social life of Cyprus. It actually aims at contributing to the creation of Active Citizens.
- II. “Youth in Action” Program: It is the EU Program for young people aged 15-28 who are permanent residents in one of the 27 member states of the European Union or in countries members of the Program. Participants are informal groups of young people, youth organizations, youth mentors, local authorities and any non-governmental

¹⁵ www.moec.gov.cy

organization involved in youth matters. It promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, non-formal learning, participation and intercultural dialogue.

- III. Youth Board of Cyprus' Advisory Bodies: The Youth Board of Cyprus, in addition to its own agency and internal structures, incorporates four advisory bodies: the Political Committee, the Students Committee, the Trade Unions Committee and the General Advisory Body. In these bodies participate the proportional youth organizations and their role is mainly consulting towards the Board of Directors of the Youth Board of Cyprus for several youth issues.
- IV. Municipal Youth Councils: It is a purely participation program on a local level, in collaboration with the Local Authorities. A Municipal Youth Council is consisted of all local youth organizations, informal groups of young people and young people who wish to participate individually and it acts as a counseling body for the Municipality for all the local youth affairs.
- V. Youth Clubs: Youth Clubs are Community Organizations with voluntary establishment aiming at the progress and well being of the youth of their local community, the involvement and responsible participation in the cultural and social development of their community, the good use of young people's leisure time and the channeling of their energy creatively, the development of environmental awareness among the young people etc.

5. Youth information in Cyprus

5.1 The structure of youth information

Please describe how youth information is organized in your country answering the following questions.

Do youth information points / centers exist? YES

Does youth information coordinated at the national level exist? YES

Does youth information coordinated at the regional level exist?

A Youth Information Coordinator is situated at the Youth Information Centre (YIC) in Kato Polemidia and is responsible for the two Youth Information Centers of Limassol District. Another Coordinator is situated at the YIC of Larnaca and is also responsible for the YIC in Nicosia.

Is youth information in your country member of any European network (ERYICA, EYCA, Eurodesk)? If yes, name the network: Cyprus Youth Information Centers' Network is member of ERYICA and the main partner of Eurodesk Cy. The Network is operating under the same Department with the European Youth Card program (Dpt. Of Youth Infrastructure Projects), which is a full member of EYCA.

5.2. The youth information services

Please provide the percentage of municipalities with a youth information point/centre.

Is there an online national youth information system? NO.

If yes, please provide the links to the relevant webpage(s), state if the portal provides youth information only on a specific topic.

Are there any online regional youth information systems? NO

If yes, please provide the links to the relevant webpage(s), state if the portal provides youth information only on a specific topic.

Please describe existing national or regional (federal states) print publications for information of young people in your country (e.g. magazines, folders/brochures).

5.3. Topics of youth information

In relation to the structures of youth information you mentioned above, what are the main contents of information delivered to young people?

- √ career guidance
- √ studies and scholarships
- √ jobs and training
- √ general health matters
- √ relationships and sexuality

- √ social security benefits
- √ rights of young people
- consumer rights
- √ European opportunities for young people
- √ youth activities and exchanges

5.4. Young people's involvement in youth information

How do young people participate in the national/regional system of youth information?

The Youth Information Centers' visitors are often asked over an activity before it is organized, on the design and content of a leaflet, through questionnaires on the evaluation of services and as volunteers if an event requires help.

6. Informal ways of young people's participation

Please describe informal ways used by young people to make their voices heard in society in your country.

Young people in Cyprus participate in various informal ways, apart from voting. The most common way is the participation in one of the hundreds of NGO's. The Youth Board of Cyprus General Advisory Body alone consists of about 50 youth organizations, which are the island's largest and most populous organizations. In Cyprus there is still a very strong connection between society and political parties and as a result of this the political and student youth organizations are quite powerful and so a large majority of young people participates in them in one way or the other. At the same time, young people very often organize demonstrations in order to protest for several issues that they believe are important for them (e.g. education, unemployment etc).

Please describe alternative ways of youth participation connected to the use of online technologies answering the following questions:

Top down approach (e.g. online consultations): in which occasion?

Bottom up approach (e.g. organized actions through social networks and the internet): in which occasion?

1. Organized actions through social networks (e.g. Facebook) take place very often in several occasions. For instance, there was recently a case of organizing a protest against a police-violence incident that was all organized via Facebook.
2. Similar internet networking initiatives are taken also in cases of humanitarian aid towards people who need it. A young girl who needed a vast amount for a surgery in the US was helped after an initiative of a famous football player who organized a Facebook financial campaign (in combination with the support of the media) and managed to raise a very considerable amount of funds. Fortunately, the girl is all happy and healthy again.

7. Sources of information

Web-pages:

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| I. | Youth Board of Cyprus | www.youthboard.org.cy |
| II. | Ministry of Education and Culture | www.moec.gov.cy |
| III. | House of Representatives (Parliament) | www.parliament.cy |
| IV. | Ministry of Interior | www.moi.gov.cy |
| V. | Union of Cyprus Municipalities | www.ucm.org.cy |
| VI. | Pancyprian Federation of Student Unions | http://pofen.org.cy |
| VII. | Cyprus Youth Clubs Organization | www.cyco.org.cy |
| VIII. | Cyprus Youth Council | www.cyc.org.cy |