

# Youth Partnership

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



EUROPEAN UNION



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REVIEWS ON  
YOUTH POLICIES AND YOUTH WORK  
IN THE COUNTRIES OF  
SOUTH EAST EUROPE,  
EASTERN EUROPE & CAUCASUS  
[SEE Summary Report]

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NB: This report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of partner institutions  
or the EU-CoE youth partnership

Reviews on youth policies and youth work in the countries of South East Europe, Eastern Europe &  
Caucasus  
SEE Summary Report

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## 1. Introduction

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### **Background and Aims**

The Framework Partnership Agreement for the period 1 July 2010 – 31 December 2013 between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth organizes a process of reviewing on youth policies and youth work in the countries of the South East Europe (SEE), Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. In this framework National youth policy and youth work of the 7 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>i</sup> as well as Kosovo<sup>ii</sup>) was launched in 2009.

The National Reports have been prepared by selected experts through desk research on several open sources of information available about the countries, young people living there as well as the available policies and programs as well as on various aspects of National Youth Policies and youth work realities. No special research on the field was realized by the experts preparing the reports.

The ready drafts then passed a national check-up process by the main stakeholders present in the countries (governmental agencies responsible for youth affairs, main expert YNGOs, international organizations' offices in the countries etc.). The comments and corrections from

the national checkup were than incorporated in the reports in the process of preparation of the final texts.<sup>1</sup>

Summary Report of the national reviews was initiated after the preparation of the National Reports. The aim of this Report is to summarize the findings of the experts preparing the national reviews as well as to try to derive common trends and similarities and major differences of these countries in terms of national youth policies and youth work.

### **Methodology of the Summary Report**

The main method of the summary report was the desk research using exclusively the data and information provided by the national reporters in their country reviews. No other additional information was used in order to provide an objective assessment.

The draft Report is to be presented to the Partnership by March 1, 2012 and it will be finalized following the comments of the relevant parties by March 19, 2012.

### **Challenges of the Study**

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<sup>1</sup> The National Check Up for the Country report for Montenegro was not completed at the time of the drafting of the summary report.

There were some major challenges for the realization of the presented summary report.

The first and the most important one was the fact that not all the National Reports were presented on due time. Only a part of the report of Montenegro was available for the summary report, while Albania and Croatia reviews were not completed during the drafting of the summary report. Thus, Albania and Croatia are not included in the reviewing process. As a result, the summary report covers five countries and certain parts on Montenegro are not complete as the final report was not available during the summary process.

The second major challenge was the differences in the formats of the National Reports presented. Although all the experts have tried to use the guidelines provided by the contracting agency, the Reports still had some structural differences, which were making the reviewing process quite hard. Different topics were addressed in different depth, so the comparison process was not always an easy task to be realized. Especially regarding the statistics, there was a major difference between each review in terms of time covered by data, how recent is it and how much depth is covered by the available data.

## 2. Executive Summary

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The countries in the South East Europe have been going through complex political and social transformations over the past two decades. The development of youth policy and youth work was influenced by all the political and socio-economic changes that happened in 1990s.

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, new countries have emerged and radical political changes and reform processes have taken place. The SEE countries have been struggling with many difficulties that made the process of building youth policies and strengthening youth work very challenging. Youth, as one of the most vulnerable social categories, has been negatively affected from the long processes of transition and conflict in the region. The current political situation and major administrative differences in institutional structures keep affecting youth policies and youth work and make the task of a policy review more challenging.

Evidence based research in the region is also another challenge. In most of the countries in the review there are not so many studies focusing on the youth and the youth policies. In general, there is a major shortage of reliable and valid statistical data on the situation, attitudes and preferences of young people. Even census data to analyze the demographic trends are missing or outdated for most of the countries. In Serbia for instance, last census was almost ten years ago and data on many cases such as the number of immigrants, young entrepreneurs, even young people with disabilities are either missing or do not exist at all.

To illustrate the complex political realities of the region, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a good example. BiH is composed of two state entities (The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska). There are also ten cantons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as one self-governing district (District of Brcko). If one adds the municipalities that operate in both state entities (total of 142) which are in some ways in charge of youth policies, the challenge of an in depth youth policy review may be better understood.

All these complex political, social and institutional differences lead to an important conclusion: it is not scientifically possible to draw comparative conclusions among these countries based on the available reviews. To illustrate the point, existence of a certain law or an institution dealing directly with youth in a certain country does not necessarily mean that the youth policy in that particular country is better, or more developed than another country that does not have a direct institution, but work within a more complex and radically different structure. As the mere existence of laws and institutions do not directly mean effective functioning and implementation, without detailed and comparative data, one should refrain from drawing comparative conclusions across countries. The author of this report follows this rationale while drawing conclusions and focuses on individual level analysis trying to transmit the reality and situation in each country, without comparing one country to the other.

There is also a major legislative difference on how youth is defined in the countries under review. In general, the legal definition of youth covers a range of ages from 14 to 35 years old. As youth is defined differently, reaching an exact number of youth population and comparing them across countries are impossible. Detailed and up to date demographic data on various sub-groups of young people are also lacking (e.g. urban and rural youth, young refugees, migrants etc.).

When the country reviews are analyzed, one can identify certain common trends and challenges regarding youth policies and youth work. First and most important challenge that all five reviewed countries are facing is the unemployment among young people. This challenge is affecting the whole society, not only the young people. As a result of unemployment being a chronic problem, young people are facing major delays in transition to adulthood and establishing their independent lives. More and more young people in the region are remaining in educational system as the prospects of getting a job upon graduation are minimal, and these prolonged education periods and increasing numbers are putting further burden on already fragile education systems that have been suffering from insufficient state funds. Furthermore, due to unemployment and related problems (increased expense of

living, insufficient or no income for young people, etc.) the number of young people living with their parents and extended families are also very high in the region. In certain cases, such as Serbia, even the married couples continue to live with the families of one of the spouses. Of course, the traditional family structure and social pressure are important elements as well, which traditionally requires young people to remain with their families until they set up their own families. However, the very low number of housing facilities for young people and lack of enough dorms (even) for university students intensify the problem.

A very serious challenge for all reviewed countries is the brain drain. Aggravated by the acute unemployment, political uncertainties and negative economic conditions, majority of the young people in the five reviewed countries, especially well trained and skilled ones, are contemplating moving to another country. For instance, 67 per cent of the young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina indicated that they would be willing to leave their country for at least one other reason apart from education, and even more drastically, 9 per cent of the young people indicated that they have already undertaken concrete steps to leave Bosnia and Herzegovina to move to another country. In FYR Macedonia, more than 50 per cent of young people indicate that they see their future abroad. In Montenegro, majority of the students consider moving abroad as the only possibility for career development and more than half of them indicate that high unemployment of people with high education is forcing them to consider moving abroad. Serbia is suffering from the brain drain most acutely as well. According to a study, it is estimated that 73,000 people migrated from Serbia in the period 1990-2000, of which 17,000 were with university degrees. The flow of people continued in the following decade, in which 2000 people with advanced degrees are believed to have left the country. The desire of leaving the country is still eminent, in which one out of every four young person declared their willingness to leave. This trend of losing educated and skilled young people leads to disastrous outcomes for these countries, they lose all the years of investment in social capital, and the demographic trends are also disturbed. With the departure of young people, these potentially younger countries turn into rapidly aging ones, putting extra strains on social security, benefits and welfare systems.

### **Table 1. Population and Median Age**

Reviews on youth policies and youth work in the countries of South East Europe, Eastern Europe & Caucasus  
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Country	Population	Median Age	Median Age 2011 est*
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.8 Million (2009)	39.4 yrs (2010)	40.7 yrs (2011 est)
Kosovo	1.8 Million (2009)	28.7 yrs (2010)	26.7 yrs (2011 est)
FYR Macedonia	2 Million (2009)	35.9 yrs (2010)	35.8 yrs (2011 est)
Montenegro	0.6 Million (2009)	35.9 yrs (2010)	37.8 yrs (2011 est)
Serbia	9.9 Million (2009)	37.6 yrs (2010)	41.3 yrs (2011 est)

Source: The Economist World in Figures (\*2011 median age estimates are from CIA World Fact Book)

Relations with the European Union (EU), and the prospects of an eventual membership appear as very important driving forces for social and economic reforms for the reviewed countries. Either through participation to the European Commission's youth and education programs, or receiving funds from European institutions, these countries are able offer young people certain opportunities that would not be possible otherwise. The desire for the EU membership is also acting as an important catalyst for the legislative arrangements and reforms as well as institution building in the reviewed countries. Different states are in different stages of passing necessary laws dealing with youth and establishing relevant institutions. It is also important to note that the European Non-Governmental Organizations and several European states are playing important roles in youth policies and youth work in the reviewed five countries. The support provided by individual EU member states and European organizations are creating important impetus for especially in capacity building, networking and research in youth field and youth work. However, as it is the case in FYR Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, availability of such foreign funds lead to two major negative and unintended outcomes: First, the competition for funds creates an obstacle for networking and inter-institution cooperation among youth organizations as they tend to see each other as potential competitors for limited funds. Second, foreign funds lead to certain sustainability problems in the countries, as the organizations and activities may terminate upon the ending of the funding. Thus, well designed sustainability and exit strategies as well as funding aimed at capacity building and networking are more in demand and in need.

In terms of cultural activities and leisure time in the SEE countries, there are also common trends. Due to high unemployment rates and economic difficulties, young people in all five countries tend to socialize in passive and non-productive manners. Internet and mobile usage are very high among young people in the region, but the reviews indicate that such information and communication technologies are mainly used for entertainment purposes rather than educative and self-development ones. Hanging around in coffee shops or local pubs is the most common past time activity for young people in the region as well as high TV viewership. Overall, it is not possible to identify structured, participatory and productive cultural and leisure activities for young people in the SEE countries and the current trends shape young people as consumers rather than producers. In terms of health challenges, hard data is not sufficient to conduct in depth analysis; however existing data from all countries indicate a rapid decrease in the age of starting in smoking and drinking.

Mobility is a field of research that provides contrasting outcomes. The young people in the reviewed countries display high levels of interest in travelling, especially to different countries. However, due to financial and certain visa difficulties, the mobility of young people in SEE is very limited<sup>iii</sup>. The case is most dramatic in Bosnia and Herzegovina where only 12 per cent of young people from the Federation of BiH travelled to Republic of Srpska, while 33 per cent of young people from Republic of Srpska travelled to Federation of BiH. Travel to other ex-Yugoslav countries is very common among young people, especially in Montenegro, where majority of the young people have travelled at least once to Serbia and another ex-Yugoslav country.

### 3. Situation of Youth

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#### 3.1 Definition of youth

In the five countries under review, the youth is defined by various types of legislation and other political documents. In general it is covering range of ages from 14 to 35 years old. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there are two definitions of youth in parallel to the dual administrative state structure, although these two definitions are very similar. “The Law on the Youth of the Federation of BiH” and the “Republic of Srpska Law on Youth Organization” regulates and defines the youth; first one stating youth means persons aged 15 to 30 years and the latter from 16 to 30. The third self-governed Brcko District does not have a legal definition of youth.

In Kosovo, according to the Law on Participation and Empowerment of Youth (2010), youth is defined as persons aged between 15 and 24 years old, however, in different legal and social circumstances different actors use larger classifications, such as 18-35 years old.

After almost 20 years of independence, the status of youth in the FYR Macedonia is not concretely defined. The existing laws and regulations only partially treat the youth issue and the situation of youth in the country. In general sense it is used to define a category of population aged 15-24 that is particularly vulnerable to socio-economic changes in the society.

Similar to the situation in FYR Macedonia, there is no legal definition for youth in Montenegro either. It was left to the authors of the various strategies related with youth to set the age limit. The age limit set by the National Youth Action Plan (NYAP) is becoming increasingly the standard definition, which includes the persons aged between 15 and 29. However, the National Plan of Action for Children also defines children as persons under the age of 18, thus there is major overlap in the definitions in Montenegro, which requires clear differentiation.

In Serbia, however, there is a clear definition of young people outlined in the National Youth Strategy, which covers the portion of the population aged between 15-30 years of age. It is also worth noting that the Serbian National Youth Strategy refers to the concept of youth as a stage of life between childhood and adulthood, which is a sociological reference rather than biological. The National Youth Strategy of Serbia also deals with youth under defined sub-groups: 15-19; 20-24 and 25-30.

### **3.2 Key figures on young people**

There is a general trend of aging in most of the countries under review, with the exceptions of Kosovo and FYR Macedonia. While the countries in SEE have younger demographics compared with other countries in Europe, the deteriorating economic conditions, high levels of youth unemployment and political and social developments are affecting the demographics negatively, forcing young people to migrate or to delay establishing families.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the share of people under 15 decreased by 7 per cent between 1991 and 2007 and the number of persons aged between 15 and 29 also dropped from 1,091,775 to 777,000 (a drop of almost 30 per cent). This drop is most acute in between 2000-2007, in which number of young people aged between 15-30 decreased by 20 per cent in seven years, mainly due to the war and post-war transition. According to the estimates of BiH Statistics Agency, around 92,000 young people left the country between 1996 and 2001. As an evidence of lack of systematic data collection, the sub groups of youth in BiH in terms of sex, age groups, minorities and rural-urban distributions were not available for the review.

In Kosovo, the estimated population is around 2 million and over 70 per cent of this population is under 30 years of age. In FYR Macedonia, the population of persons aged 15-29 forms the 23.56 per cent of the population.

Montenegro has a much smaller population, which is estimated as 640.9 thousand by the author of the country review. The portion of the population aged between 15 and 29 years is estimated as 23.2 per cent. Similar to other countries in the region, no statistical data was available in terms of urban-rural settlement of young people. The demographic trends in Montenegro are in line with the region; the population, and the mass forced migration due to armed conflicts and political situation aggravated the situation significantly. The median age of the society was 32.7 years in 1991 and in 2011 it is estimated to be around 37 years.

Young people in Serbia make up around 20 per cent of the whole population, with a number around one and a half million. However, the census data used in reporting is dated from 2002 and considering the constant flow of migration from Serbia, especially youth migration, this figure should be handled with extreme care. Of this number of young people, majority (around one million) of it is within the age bracket of 15-24. When the projections are made for the year 2009, based on the 2002 census data and the demographic trends, it is estimated that the number of young people aged 15-24 is decreasing by a figure of 20,000 annually.

### **3.3 Living conditions and situation of young people**

#### **3.3.1 Culture**

In terms of cultural activities and leisure time in the SEE countries, there are certain common trends. **Due to high unemployment rates and economic difficulties, young people in all five countries tend to socialize in passive and non-productive manners.** Internet and mobile usage is very high among young people in the region, but the reviews indicate that such information and communication technologies are mainly used for entertainment purposes rather than educative and self-development ones. Hanging around in coffee shops or local pubs is the most common past time activity for young people in the region as well as high TV viewership. **Overall, it is not possible to identify structured, participatory and productive cultural and leisure activities for young people in the SEE countries and the current trends shape young people as consumers rather than producers.**

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, young people mainly rely on friends and peers (58 per cent) and television (29 per cent) when they are deciding on participation in cultural events. Young people are also very dissatisfied with the cultural possibilities and facilities offered by local and regional authorities and the support provided in terms of their own cultural and leisure activities. Only 7 per cent of the young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are involved in sports activities within an organization or association.

In Kosovo, highest interest of young people is directed towards sports activities, both as performers and spectators. However, the review reveals that majority of young people are very dissatisfied with the existing sports facilities and organized activities.

The culture of socialization with peers is a very important part of the life styles of young people from FYR Macedonia. In most cases coffee bars and public spaces are common gathering places. Most of the young people in FYR Macedonia spend their leisure time in such places or in social networks on the internet. Almost 50 per cent of the young people indicated such activities and watching TV as their most preferred and common past time activity, while only 20 per cent indicated sports. A recent trend is also affecting the socialization habits, as more young people tend to remain connected to internet and social networks even though they are in coffee bars with friends.

As a newly formed state, Montenegro lacks statistical data on youth and related issues. Hence, it is not possible to make observations on the demands and level of satisfaction of young people from the cultural services and cultural environment. According to a survey of institutions and organizations working with young people, only 8 per cent of the respondents find the cultural services at a sufficient level of quality and diversity. There is also the problem of insufficient number of experts specialized in working with young people in culture and art. Old Crafts are living not as a profession, but only as a hobby, continued by only a handful of individuals. As a peculiar consequence of the legal structure, many traditional cultural and art clubs, dance clubs and different forms of cultural organizations are registering themselves as

NGOs as only means of functioning legally. However, as their activities are mainly income generating and sometimes interest oriented, they do not fully fall under this definition. According to the registry data base of Ministry of Culture, there were 161 registered NGOs in 2006 mainly working in the field of culture and art. Young people in Montenegro spend their leisure time predominantly with peers, listening to music and doing sports activities. The country review indicates the experts' assessment that the past time activities of young people in Montenegro are rather passive and unstructured. **It is also feared that antisocial behavior among youth is a potential challenge for the society which is constantly on the increase.** Hyper connectivity to internet and social networks and decrease in face to face contacts is considered to be a major issue for youth in general. There are different campaigns and initiatives for encouraging internet usage in a more useful and productive manner. Young people in Montenegro tend to delay their transition into adulthood, staying for extended periods within the community of their parents. The reasons for such a tendency are cultural as well as economic. The patriarchal habits and economic dependency makes it difficult for young people to start their own private lives. Although the time periods spent within family structure is longer, it does not indicate smoother and well-functioning communication among adults and youth. In most cases, young people believe that they represent opposing sides with the adults.

Serbian youth culture is in line with the rest of the countries in the SEE region. They spend most of their time hanging out with peers, using mobile phones and internet and watching TV. Quality leisure time is often not present; 40 per cent of young people surveyed indicated that they are never engaged in any kind of sports activity, even for fun with friends. Like sport activities, cultural habits are also not very bright either: only 30 per cent of the interviewed young people indicated reading a book that is outside of school requirement. Despite high rate of internet usage, it is not being used a learning tool either, but mainly for social networking and for downloading music and movies. Their main focus is on entertainment and **young people in Serbia are more oriented towards consumption than any proactive life style.** **A noteworthy development among Serbian youth is the general tendency towards re-traditionalization as increasing number of young people define themselves as 'religious' especially in the youngest category** (15-19).

### 3.3.2 Unemployment

The complex political and social situation in the region and the conflicts of the past decades affect the employment situation in the reviewed countries and unsurprisingly young people are the most vulnerable group to the negative conditions. Unemployment without a doubt is the most important challenge in the reviewed countries and all authorities are in desperate search for tackling this issue. The high rates of unemployment leads to several major social challenges such as brain drain, namely the departure of young people with skills and education; delayed transition from education to work life as well as delayed transition to adulthood. Many young people see university education as a major condition for improvement of employment opportunities. However, at least in Kosovar case, employers put work experience higher than education. The limited employment opportunities also force young people to become part of the grey economy and join informal market. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines informal employment as *a*- lack of a signed employment contract and *b*- absence of registration by the employers. Most of the employment cases in reviewed countries, especially in Kosovo, fall into one or both of these conditions. Job seeking methods are also common in the reviewed countries, where majority of young people do not express trust in formal and structural mechanisms and rather believe that informal relations are the most efficient method of finding a job. The entrepreneurial spirit is also affected from the negative economic conditions and structure. Although majority of young people have the willingness and desire to launch their own businesses, most of them lack the necessary seed money and require support from the very start.

According to the national review, the unemployment rate for persons aged between 15 and 25 amounts to 59 per cent (2007 data) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Young women suffer more, as their unemployment rate is 7.5 per cent higher than that of men. In terms of entrepreneurship, the review outlines that eight per cent of young people tried to launch their own business, but majority of these individuals were already in employment. In terms of migration and brain drain, 67 per cent of the young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina indicated that they would be willing to leave their country for at least one other reason apart

from education, and even more drastically, 9 per cent of the young people indicated that they have already undertaken concrete steps to leave Bosnia and Herzegovina to move to another country.

Housing problems are also a major dimension of economic situation of young people. **Housing is a serious challenge that youth is facing in all five countries. The housing problems translate into other problems, such as difficulty in transition into adulthood and establishing families.**

In Bosnia and Herzegovina for instance, 93 per cent of the young married couples do not possess a private own living space and overall only 1 per cent of students can benefit from student dorms. As a remedy, only two BiH towns designed and started implementing youth housing policies, Banja Luka and Sarajevo.

Kosovo has the highest rate of youth unemployment in the reviewed SEE countries. While the unemployment rate of Kosovo is 47.5 per cent (2008), it is estimated that around 60 per cent of Kosovars aged between 15-24 are unemployed. Unemployment in general is considered to be the biggest social problem of Kosovo. The high rate of unemployment is aggravated with a transition from unemployment to inactivity, signaling a discouragement among jobseekers, especially among young people. Unemployment for extended periods is common among young people. According to a 2004 survey, almost 43 per cent of unemployed young people have been searching for a job for more than a year. Unemployment is more common among young women in Kosovo, with rates double that of men. The grave economic situation and limited economic opportunities lead to a variety of negative consequences for Kosovo. Most of the young people are forced to turn into grey economy, organized crime or they become victims of violence. Limited employment opportunities also force young people to consider migration. For Kosovo, remittances are estimated at 43 per cent of the GDP. A World Bank survey estimates that almost half of the employed young people are informally employed in 2003.

Unemployment remains as a major social problem for FYR Macedonia as well. The unemployment rate of the society is around 30 per cent and unfortunately there is no statistic

on the percentages of change in youth unemployment. However, youth unemployment remains as an important policy area and supporting youth entrepreneurship is seen as a major tactic to overcome this obstacle. Over the past years there have been small grants in self-employment projects. Similar to Kosovo, a lot of young people are either in temporary employment or part of informal economy. Although there are available support mechanisms and trainings for opening businesses as well as career guidance and counseling mechanisms, it is hard to argue that such mechanisms are utilized efficiently in FYR Macedonia.

40 per cent of the Montenegrin population aged between 15 to 65 years is inactive, neither working nor seeking employment. 12.6 per cent of this group has given up job seeking due to unemployment over prolonged periods. The share of unemployed individuals below the age of 25 years is 29.8 per cent in 2000 but thanks to the positive trends in the labor market and reform processes, this rate decreased to 18.2 per cent by 2008. However, **the current economic situation is not promising and following the financial crisis, young people being the most vulnerable**. In 2010 27.2 per cent of the young persons aged between 25 and 30 were unemployed. The prolonged periods of unemployment is an acute problem in Montenegro, in which the average time of waiting for employment is 3.7 years. **Education is perceived as a remedy for unemployment by young people, and due to limited employment possibilities, they tend to prolong their education, in attempt of getting higher degrees to gain an advantage in the labor market.** However, **the labor market cannot cope efficiently with the increasing number of graduates and as a result, the number of young unemployed people with a diploma increased** by 55.2 per cent since 2007. This situation is aggravated with the hyper production of private high schools and faculties since the independence of Montenegro. These private institutions cannot match their quality in education with mechanisms of guidance and counseling in order to facilitate a smoother transition from education into work life. As a result, Montenegro faces the risk of having **a significant number of unemployed but highly educated young people within a few years**. The situation of youth unemployment is also directly linked with other factors such as the strong informal economy, mismatch the between the market needs and education system; the socialist heritage which curbs the competitiveness of young people as they tend to seek 'secure' employment within state structures; and the ongoing influence of nepotism in seeking employment. In general young people believe that they are heavily discriminated in the labor market and social networks

play a more significant role in employment than qualifications and skills. The informal economy functions against the young people in three basic forms in Montenegro: employment directly in informal economy, unregistered employment in the formal sector and partial registered employment in formal sector. Despite all the disadvantages of taking part of informal economy, due to desperation and high rates of unemployment, almost half of the young unemployed declared willingness to accept working as unregistered workers. The Government of Montenegro initiated a series of measures to combat unemployment, with young people as the main focus. Support for self-employment through micro loans is a striking and rather successful example.

The transformation from a society with guaranteed full-time, steady employment to a struggling free market economy had very negative consequences for the Serbian youth in terms of employment and economic independence. Although the comprehensive economic reforms carried out in 2000s brought some positive change to the overall economic life in Serbia, the rate of unemployment steadily increased over years, with unemployed youth forming the biggest group. The labor market has deteriorated and the development of private sector was not sufficient in order to create new job opportunities. Furthermore, **the ongoing brain- drain and the mis-planning in the education system which produces graduates of vocational schools with skills that are no more required or relevant to the market also contribute negatively to the increasing unemployment of young people.** The unemployment rate of people aged 15-24 was around 46.4 per cent in 2010, compared with 20.3 per cent average in the EU. The disturbing fact is that almost 10 per cent young people are NEETs (neither in employment, education or training). An important side product of this situation is the prolonged education of young people with the stress of unemployment. The shortcomings in the education system are also aggravating the situation. Many young people are considered to be incompetent and under skilled to perform the work they are trained by the formal education system. Besides, career guidance and counseling system in Serbia is still underdeveloped. **Many young people are being forced into informal economy.** A significant number of young people are considered at the risk of poverty especially considering those in risk of education related exclusion. Young recipients of social welfare aged 16-30 represent 17.2 per cent of all welfare recipients. **The limited job prospects and economic problems affect the lives of young people in all different levels.** The problem of housing for instance, is

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becoming more acute as a result of financial difficulties. Almost 70 per cent of young people in Serbia live with their parents, and this problem is valid even for the age group 31-35 (41 per cent of those still live with parents). Similarly, 63 per cent of young people aged 19-35 are financially dependent upon their parents and 15 per cent has to receive support from parents on top of their income to make ends meet.

### 3.3.3 Participation

Participation of young people to social, civic and economic life is very limited and unregulated in all countries under review. Councils and student organizations in certain schools and universities exist but their role and impact are very limited and therefore there is a very low level of participation of young people in such bodies. Youth organizations appear to be the only channels for young people to become active in civic life, while in some instances, such as Montenegro, municipal level youth councils also offer major participatory opportunities.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, participation of the youth at the local level in activities of the public and even NGO sector is very weak. Networking between youth organizations is lacking and youth information channels are virtually nonexistent. **The poor and insufficient communication channels pertains the youth participation even in the levels of design and implementation of leisure and cultural activities.** Only one per cent of the young people are institutionally active in representing the interests and solving the problems of young people. The relevant institutions that offer participatory channels for young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are local councils and youth forums, and youth commissions in local administrative bodies. However, these channels are not efficient and the rate of youth participation is almost nonexistent.

In Kosovo, the situation of youth participation is rather dim. The country review reveals that there is very limited influence of youth on the institutions that affect their lives, whether in family, at school or in the community. Furthermore, Kosovar young people display a lack of

faith in Kosovo institutions in general, questioning their efficiency and integrities. The country review also underlines the societal change following the war, in which the volunteer culture is severely affected. **In the post war society, the students are more reluctant to volunteer, and majority of them are motivated of leaving the country. The voluntary work is in decline since 1999 due to poverty, ethnic and social divisions in the society.** There is also a lack of a regional network and sufficient legal regulations that would encourage and stimulate volunteerism in Kosovo. Youth NGOs are active but they are concentrated in major urban areas and young people in rural areas are excluded and underserved. In terms of legality, United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) “Regulation on the Registration and Operation of Non-Governmental Organizations in Kosovo” and the “Law on Access to Official Documents” frame the legal background in the area of youth participation.

FYR Macedonia also displays similar trends in terms of volunteering. Despite the efforts to increase the youth participation and promotion of volunteering, the number of young people participating in the society and volunteering is very low. **The channels for direct participation of young people in decision making processes are not sufficient and efficient.** At the moment of reporting, only three of the 85 municipalities in FYR Macedonia have established youth councils as consultative bodies. Although there has been a law for volunteerism adopted several years ago, which offers concrete measures for stimulation and recognition of volunteer activities, the number of volunteers are in decline. On the other hand, volunteering possibilities abroad such as the European Voluntary Service of European Commission Youth in Action Program are very popular. FYR Macedonia is the leader in number of sending European Voluntary Service (EVS) projects among SEE countries in the period of 2007-2009. An important mechanism of youth participation is through national youth councils. In FYR Macedonia, Youth Council of Macedonia was established in 1990 with the participation of 12 national youth associations. However, as of 2003, it had only 6 members and it had no major activity and exists only on paper.

In Montenegro, young people are not even fully participating in the NGOs. Due to the absence of continued inter-sector cooperation and lack of sustainability in work, many NGOs function very shortly, depending completely on the enthusiasm of individuals. The level of awareness

in youth policies in Montenegro is extremely low. **Young people in general are disinterested and unmotivated for being engaged in social and cultural matters that are directly affecting their lives.** This lack of interest and initiative is also reflected in the general view of the youth within larger society. Majority of the people, including those who are in responsible positions within institutions and civil society organizations believe that the Montenegrin youth is not able to articulate and express their needs and preferences, and only partially able to recognize and advocate. In a brief study conducted in Montenegro, the participating young people argued that they are not used to being recognized and to express their own needs and preferences as a result of the system which does not include them at any stage and all is offered to them in a top-down manner. At local level, only few Montenegrin municipalities have functioning youth councils, and a National Montenegrin Youth Council is in the process of being created. NGOs appear as the only channel that young people can get their opinions heard, but with very limited reach and effect. **The political parties are heavily distrusted by the young people,** where two out of three young people declare no trust to political parties. There is a lack of data on volunteering in Montenegro. The initial impression is that the numbers are rather high as almost all functioning NGOs rely on volunteers mainly. However, the numbers should be handled with caution as one young person being a volunteer in several organizations is a very common practice. Although a strategy was adopted in 2009 for the development of volunteering, there is no action plan. However, on a positive note, the concept of volunteering has a high level of social recognition and there is the program for National Volunteer Service (ADP-Zid).

Active participation in Serbia is a popular idea among young people, but the reality does not reflect this positive opinion. Only a tiny fraction of young people (3-6 per cent) tend to be personally active, especially in politics. **Young people are more interested to participate in social and economic life rather than political life.** Around 72 per cent of young people declare that they are not interested in politics. This lack of interest is also reflected in the low level of trust in political parties and politicians. The political turmoil over the past two decades and the important role played by youth movements may offer a possible explanation for a potential activism-fatigue. Most young people tend to be active in hobby and sports associations. **The studies reveal that young people from suburban areas with increased financial independence and higher education levels tend to be more active.** According to

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surveys in the report, 20 per cent of young people declare to be engaged in volunteer activities. Most incentives for volunteering were sociotropic in nature as well as having fun. Gaining work experience and increasing employability are not considered to be linked with volunteering. In order to contribute to the level of activism and promote further youth participation in social life, Ministry of Youth and Sports is organizing capacity building seminars for youth organizations' representatives.

### 3.3.4 Health

The countries in the region have varying degrees of medical care and social security services available for young people. While valid and up to date hard data are missing for majority of the countries in the review, one issue that sticks out the smoking as a growing social problem. **While the age of starting to smoking is constantly decreasing in the reviewed countries, number of young people smoking habitually is on the increase.** In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is estimated that one third of young people between 15 and 24 smoke regularly.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no universal health insurance for all young people. Thus, around 10 per cent of the young people aged between 16 and 30 are estimated to have no health coverage whatsoever. Most common ways of having health insurance for young people is through benefiting from their parents social security (43 per cent), through the employment bureau (23 per cent) or through employment (23 per cent). On the other hand, 91 per cent of the young people assess themselves as healthy.

In Kosovo, youth friendly health services and information mechanisms are not sufficient and efficient, due to financial, participatory and educational reasons. A low budget allocated for health care exacerbates the problem as even existing health services are short of meeting young people's needs. **The general social assumption that "young people are healthy", the reluctance to discuss 'taboo' issues such as sexuality and fear of social exclusion are also other factors that affect efficient health policies for youth.** Overall, in Kosovo there is a major lack of

health courses/subjects in schools, lack of medical services in schools, and very little information and consultancy services are available for young people. The information and guidance services are offered by some NGOs, but with little cooperation with the relevant authorities.

According to the Macedonian healthcare system, every citizen who does not have security via employment is covered by the state system and gets free health care. This is an important advantage for young people as they get free health insurance during education and in unemployment. Smoking is on the rise (26 per cent of teenagers aged 13-15 smoke), but it is part of a social phenomenon as FYR Macedonia is considered to be the second country in Europe by number of smokers. According to the official statistical data, every third pregnancy is aborted in FYR Macedonia, which does not include the data from private clinics and practices which also perform abortions. This is a concerning issue as **most of the abortions are among young, especially teenage population.**

Montenegro, similar to FYR Macedonia, offers universal health care for all citizens aged 15 and below. Over this age, different forms of insurance mechanisms are offered to young people: through parents (if they have health insurance) until the age of 25; through the Institute for Employment (if unemployed) and through the employer (if employed). Smoking, alcohol and drug abuse are important factors that affect the well-being of young people. Smoking is a socially acceptable behavior and the age of starting to smoke is on the decline, reaching 15-16 years. Alcohol consumption is also culturally ever-present and socially acceptable. In Montenegro, **the rapid increase in juvenile delinquency statistics is also noteworthy.** The number of crimes committed by young people increased almost 100 per cent from 2000 till 2008. Gambling appeared as a recent social problem that is affecting the well-being of young people in Montenegro. According to the country review, nearly 70 per cent of the young people gamble, with 30 per cent of this group gambles everyday or several times a week. Another worrying sign is **the lower ages of starting to gamble.** 42 per cent of the cited survey respondents indicated that they have tried a game of chance before the age of 10 and 37.2 per cent of them did so between 10 and 14 years of age.

In the case of Serbia, the youth has the lowest rate of illnesses and deaths among all segments of the population, however **due to unhealthy life styles and risky behavior; young people pose a vulnerable group in terms of health and well-being.** The data on drug use and other addictions is incomplete and the conducted surveys are methodologically not synchronized. However, if they are to be taken as indicators, there are some worrying signs: **the age of first contact with alcohol, drugs and tobacco products is on a constant decline.** Although the number of smokers displays signals of a decrease, the frequency of alcohol abuse among Serbian youth has an upward tendency. According to a study covering the period 2000-2006, one out of every three young people aged 15-19 is a regular drinker and 5.5 per cent of the same age group is involved in binge drinking at least once a month. **There is also a general concern about the rise of in the number of substance users, lower ages of first contact and more frequent use of different substances.** **In terms of STDs, there is also an upward tendency in the number of young people that are infected.** Main reasons for this upward trend are frequent change of partners and preference of contraceptives other than condoms. A study of 2006 quoted in the country review estimates the average change of sexual partners as 2.4 per year with a condom usage rate of 50 per cent.

### **3.3.5 Mobility**

Mobility is a curious case for the countries that are reviewed. **While clear majorities of young people express willingness to be mobilized for tourism, educational and socio-cultural motives, the rates of mobility are very low, except for national travels,** and in some instances such as Montenegrin youth within the ex-Yugoslav space. **The main obstacles for the low mobility of young people are the economic difficulties and the strict visa regimes of the countries that young people declare interest in.** The absence of special state mobility programs for young people is also affecting the situation.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, rate of national mobility among young people is rather high. However, for the most part, young people travel solely within their own state entity. Young people from Federation of BiH travelled to Republic of Srpska only 12 per cent of the cases,

while only 33 per cent of young people from Republic of Srpska travelled to Federation of BiH. 40 per cent of the young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not have a passport.

Young people in Kosovo, argue that youth mobility is not guaranteed regardless of ethnic origin. Problems related to youth mobility represent one of the most limiting factors to the successful integration of Kosovo Serbs into Kosovo society at large after the ending of the conflict with the Kosovo Albanians.

Young people in Montenegro do not have structural or national programs enabling and encouraging mobility. Migration within and abroad is a common issue. Within the country, there is a major population shift especially from North of country to the centre. Many young people also migrate to other countries, with USA and Germany being the top destinations. Being relatively new and small country is also creating challenges for youth mobility in Montenegro. Young people are subjected to a rigorous visa regime by majority of the countries that are popular choices as destinations. Furthermore, **due to lack of embassies in the country, there is a need to travel to Belgrade with additional expenses borne as well as the likelihood of visa application being rejected.** Therefore, **the most popular destination for travelling abroad remains the former Yugoslav republics.** 83.6 per cent of the young people who travelled abroad went to another former Yugoslav republic. The search for better education is another major drive for youth mobility. **Young people often travel within and outside of their country for higher education opportunities.** The question that remains is the low return rates of the young people who receive university or graduate education abroad.

Serbian figures on international youth mobility are not very promising. Almost half of young people never travelled outside of the country and only 25 per cent travelled somewhere in last two years.

### **3.3.6 Education and Training**

Although the countries in the SEE region have showed a major progress in terms of quality and diversity in the education and training fields over the past decade, there are certain systematic and structural shortcomings which are widespread in the region. **In general the education systems of the countries are dominated by traditional and non-participatory methods.** There has been little funding and planning for the update of the systems and inclusion of transversal key competences. Integration of Non-Formal Learning (NFL) methods into education and the recognition of NFL and Informal Learning is lacking in general, both at social and political levels. However, the level of development in the region, especially through the work of youth organizations, is very promising.

According to the country review, the education figures are strong in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2005 the overall university enrollment rate was 25 per cent in 2005, but the graduation rate within prescribed time is only 10 per cent, which is another indicator of **delayed transition from school to work life.**

Young people in Kosovo are extremely dissatisfied with the access to education and the quality of education. As a result, **there is a very high dropout rate and early school leaving in Kosovo.** It is estimated that half of young people leave education system before they are 18 years old. The dropout rates in higher education is more than 50 per cent. In urban areas both primary and secondary schools are overcrowded and can only operate in two or even three shifts during the day, which seriously hinders the quality of education offered. The Kosovo government is aware of the situation and established the educational sector as a priority area. However, the lack of financial means hinder a major reform, as the government funds are mainly cover teachers' salaries, while a mere 1.7 per cent of education budget can be allocated for curricula development and teacher training. In terms of education out of formal system, Kosovo is also an interesting case. **Quite a high number of young people in Kosovo attend courses outside of the formal school system. Language and IT courses are among the most preferred and frequented by young people.**

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia allocates around 6 per cent of its budget to education, which is higher than most of European states. Reforms in education made secondary education obligatory and thanks to the opening of several private universities as well as expansion of state universities, number of students is significantly rising. However, 30 per cent of students indicated that they would rather study abroad than in a university in FYR Macedonia. Non-Formal Learning and Education in FYR Macedonia is not playing a significant role and is not recognized by the society and decision makers. However, despite the lack of social and official recognition, the level of NFL is rather satisfactory and the participation of young people in NFL activities is increasing. According to a trend analysis in 2010, half of the interviewed young people indicated that they have participated in some kind of NFL activity.

Elementary education is obligatory in Montenegro, and the school enrolment rate is very high (99.25 per cent in 2009/2010 academic year). Vocational education is offered by a network of 26 professional and 11 mixed schools. The vocational training is very popular in Montenegro, in which 68 per cent of total number of students in secondary schools attends. Part time schooling is also a particular and successful educational practice that exists in Montenegro. Students who do not fit into regular curriculum of secondary education for any reason may choose to attend part time schooling, with assessment exams at the end of the academic year. From 2007 to 2009, 36,5 per cent of all high school graduates were enrolled in part time schooling. University education is organized mainly around State University of Montenegro, which has 19 university units, three institutes and three independent study programs. However, the Montenegrin university education is not free of controversy. Although plagiarism is strictly banned in academic studies, there is currently no effective way for the detection and prevention of plagiarism. Colleges and schools do not use any software to check plagiarism which is affecting the scientific quality and competitiveness of Montenegrin university system and students. The existence of a grey market of academic papers and writing of assignments by order is also known. In terms of Non-Formal Learning, the present national framework is currently under preparation, and falls short of covering the volume and range of activities in the country. There is no record of the NFL activities, their qualities and the number of young people engaged in these activities. Ministry in charge registered a total of 32 licensed adult education organizers under the Law on National Vocational Qualifications by the end of 2009. The acquired knowledge, skills and competences are assessed by an

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Examination Board, according to the aforementioned law, and if the applicant is deemed successful, the qualifications are certified in line with the provisions of national vocational qualifications.

The investment in education in Serbia is around 3.3 per cent of the budget in 2009, which is lower than most other European states. Furthermore, as a result of traditional and conservative education system, Serbian students are failing behind in OECD average scores in education. PISA results for 2009 shows that 33 per cent of Serbian pupils can be considered functionally illiterate. As a response to these negative developments, in 2009 a new law on foundations of educational system was adopted for further reform. Special effort is being paid to link the vocational education with the needs of the labour market. In March 2010 the strategy for career guidance and counselling to meet this need. Non-Formal Education is an area that lacks basic recognition in Serbia and there is no data on the quantity and quality of Non Formal Learning opportunities or the number of young people benefiting from these opportunities. Non Formal Education methods are being used more and more by Serbian civil society organizations and youth organizations in their work. However, the level of recognition is very low and most institutions don't recognize or validate NFE.

### **3.3.7 Youth and Human Rights**

Not all of the reviewed SEE countries have a separate legal framework (e.g. law on youth) for young people. Mainly the rights of young people are regulated by laws and codes of respective spheres (e.g. Law on Education, Labour Code, Family Code, and Law on Military Duty etc.).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the BiH constitution, an additional human rights agreement is applied dealing with young people: The Convention on the Rights of the Child. There is also a joint commission of both BiH Parliamentary Assembly houses for human rights, children and youth rights, immigration, refugees, asylum and ethics. Among other issues, this commission also addressing the youth rights and improvement of existing rights.

In Kosovo, the inter-ethnic situation is considered to be improved compared to the past. There are still shortcomings in the integration of minority communities into society. Especially North of Kosovo remains as the most troublesome area.

In Montenegro, a significant number of young people indicate that young people should be more informed about their rights and 61 per cent of the participants in a survey presented in the country review stated that they do rarely or never use their rights. Peer pressure, social structure and lack of information and guidance are main reasons stated for lack of usage of rights and participation. Young people can get free legal aid in legal services of local governments in most towns in Montenegro. This legal aid service covers civil, contentious and administrative proceedings, but not criminal ones, which can only be serviced by lawyers. Such legal services in criminal proceedings are free for young people who are part of the welfare system only. In Montenegro, the institutional structure for human and youth rights is rather developed. In addition to the ministry of Human and Minority rights, there is also the Institution of the Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman) to deal particularly with cases of human rights and freedom violations by public organs. Overall, 39 per cent of young people in Montenegro expressed satisfaction with their human rights education, while 37 per cent expressed dissatisfaction. However, the same study revealed that a clear majority (80 per cent) of young people believe that there is no effective protection of human rights in their country.

In Serbia, the group of young people with disabilities, children and young people in institutions, refugees and displaced young people and young returnees in the readmission process are considered to be the most vulnerable group under the risk of violation of basic rights and freedoms. Discrimination based on ethnicity, race and sexual orientation is also common within Serbian society. Young people with disabilities face an acute lack of adequate social and economic support, which overstretches the limited family resources, which in return often results with the abandoning of the young person in an institution. However, according to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia the conditions in such institutions are very bad in terms of material conditions and lack of inclusive and enabling approaches, which makes the young people highly dependent in the system and practically

lead the life of a prisoner. The Roma and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) population are also highly discriminated and subject to prejudices. The attempts to organize a Pride Parade in 2009 created a very reactionary and extremely homophobic rhetoric. Still, Pride Parade was successfully organized in 2010, showing a cooling down of the climate.

## 4. Youth policies and youth work

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### 4.1 Institutions, actors and structures

The complexity of the social and political conditions and the regional realities are clearly reflected into the institutions, actors and structures. In Bosnia and Herzegovina for instance, one observes the duality of the structure and in Kosovo, the foreign influence is clearly seen. However, each country has certain institutions, under different names and regulations that deal with youth. The level of development in terms of legal structure is also varied; while some countries have a specific legal structure dealing with youth, some others are using different legal constructs, such as family law to deal with youth and youth related issues. However, to what extent these structures function efficiently and the level of implementation require deeper and more detailed analysis, which is rather beyond the scope of these country reviews. One should also be careful in drawing comparisons across countries, as the existence of an institution or legal structure does not guarantee efficient functioning of youth policies.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the state level, within the BiH Council of Ministers, the youth issues are addressed by the Commission for Coordination of the Youth Issues in BiH (CCYI BiH). Following a 2009 decision of Council of Ministers, CCYI BiH became a standing body within the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH. Besides CCYI BiH there exists no separate division in charge of youth. The division for science and culture within the same ministry provides technical assistance to CCYI BiH. The CCYI BiH is in charge of determining the main principles in shaping of national youth policy and coordinating activities of all actors which are relevant for youth as well as working on improving youth life conditions and international representation of BiH in youth related issues. The composition of CCYI BiH is as follows: it has nine members, four representatives of government institutions and five representatives of youth NGO sector. The CCYI BiH is obliged to meet once a month. The joint commission of both BiH Parliamentary Assembly houses for human rights, children and youth rights is another important actor working to improve youth rights in BiH. However, due to the administrative structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, most of the competencies regarding the youth issues are at the two entities government levels (Republic of Srpska (RS) and Federation of BiH (FBiH)). A government representative from each entity is a member of CCYI

BiH at national levels. In Republic of Srpska, there is a ministry for Family, Sport and Youth, which directly monitors and studies the situation of youth in RS and is in charge of youth related laws, regulations and by laws at the entity level. On the other hand, at the Federation of BiH entity level, there is no ministry directly in charge of youth. There is a 'Centre for Youth' which functions as an organizational unit within the Federation Ministry of Culture and Sport. There are developments for local level youth policies through the creation of youth offices and officers in municipal levels as well as establishment of youth boards. On the non-governmental side, there is no youth council that functions at the national level in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, at the entities level, there is a youth council in Republic of Srpska level, which serves as an umbrella representative body.

In Kosovo, The Department of Youth (DoY) under Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) is responsible for youth policy. **The Department deals with youth participation and empowerment, youth employment, informal education, health and prevention and youth integration.** MCYS is responsible for policy development and co-ordination and it cooperates with relevant ministries which are responsible for actual services provided to young people. The country review states that the Department of Youth is the most advanced among the MCYS departments in terms of actual focus on core activities of a government ministry. The DoY is structured into three divisions: 1-Division of development and support of Youth; 2-Division for development of integrated policies, 3- Division for protection and integration of Youth. In Kosovo, there is also a Central Youth Action Council, a voluntary organization of youth organizations operating in Kosovo. Its main action is to act as an advisory structure and represent the interests of youth organizations at governmental level and at international youth structures. However, there is also another youth actor active in the field. Kosovo Youth Network (KYN), representing 127 youth organizations and youth centres. However, KYN mainly focuses on capacity development in youth field in Kosovo. KYN is registered as Non-Profit NGO and has been active in design, adaptation and implementation of Law for Empowerment and Participation of Youth, Kosovo Youth Action Plan and Kosovo Youth Action Council. There are also about 25 active youth centers that are licensed by the municipal directorate responsible for youth, offering a variety of services. These centers are usually physical venues provided by municipalities and by legislation, operated by an NGO. They are also engaged in income generating activities such as courses teaching languages and IT.

However, some centers also have long term donor support, for instance World Bank Kosovo Youth Development program is contributing to the capacity development of 12 youth centres. The centres are generally important social actors as they also offer services to adults acting as community centres. In terms of civil sector, there are about 5000 registered NGOs in Kosovo, but in reality only 500 of them are actually functional. Many NGOs end functioning due to lack of funding, and changes in personnel. Some NGOs in Kosovo are also accused of being a 'one man show' totally dependent on one person. Such structures are negatively affected in terms of financial stability, low-income generation strategies and weak management skills. Some NGOs also receive support from local and central authorities, but usually in kind support (space, utilities, etc.). There is also a Kosovo Youth Council that used to be self-organized in refugee camps, which deals with issues such as self-organized education, developed and structured entertainment for young people and active involvement in youth policies.

In Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the main governmental body that is in charge of youth is the Agency of Youth and Sport (AfYS). It is a governmental body with its own budget and responsibilities. AfYS was functioning as an independent ministry until 2000, but it was transformed into an agency, directly under the Prime Minister's office, following the reduction of ministries. The AfYS has three departments: Department for Sports; Department for Normative, Legal and Economic Issues and the Department for Youth. Furthermore, Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Social Care and Ministry of Culture are also connected with youth partially in scope of their activities and jurisdiction areas. As FYR Macedonia is on its way to become a full program country in the European Commission Youth in Action program, there is also the newly established National Agency, which is in charge of highly popular European Commission youth and education programs. However, there were initial problems with the National Agency during the pilot phase and its activities were suspended and it was under investigation by the European Commission. As the official national youth council, Youth Council of Macedonia is completely inactive, the only representative actor in the youth field is the SEGA coalition, which was involved in the process of drafting of national youth strategy and it leads an initiative for the preparation of a Law on Youth.

In Montenegro, the major institution in charge of the preparation and implementation of national strategies and action plans for youth is the Ministry of Education. The ministry was also in charge of the coordination and making of the National Youth Action Plan (NPAY), which was the first strategic document for youth in 2006. The Directorate of Youth and Sport under Ministry of Education is the unit dealing with youth issues. Furthermore, as outlined in NPAY, several ministries are also responsible for contributing to the youth strategy, among which there are, Ministry of Education, controlling all educational institutions and organizations, student housing and non-formal and adult education programs; Ministry of Culture is expected to contribute in the field of culture and to support young artists and their works; Ministry of Health responsible for advising and protecting youth from psycho-active substances and Ministry of Interior is in charge of the registration and regulation of civil society organizations including those are founded by young people or targeting young people. In addition, NPAY outlines and foresees active involvement and contributions of Ministries of Information Society, of Human and Minority rights; of Labour and Social Welfare and of Justice in the field of youth policy within their relevant fields of jurisdiction. An important youth policy body in Montenegro is the **National Youth Steering Committee of Montenegro (NYSC)**. NYSC is an advisory body established and appointed by the Ministry of Education. **It aims to bring together all the members of executive government actors responsible for youth issues, the representatives of the most engaged civil society representatives as well experts in various youth issues. The Council is independent in its decision making and its working priorities and functions are set out by NPAY.** It presents regular reports to relevant ministries and to the Government. Although the Committee decisions are advisory in nature, it operates on the principle of co-management, in which the non-governmental representatives form the majority. In 2009, the NYSC adopted the decision to form the National Youth Council of Montenegro, for which the process started in 2010 and currently an initiative working group is dealing with its legislation, structure and functions. Once established, it will be called Montenegrin Youth Forum. Finally, the work of the Office for Youth should also be as an influential actor in Montenegro. Office for Youth is established as a result of a two year programme between International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the NYSC. The Office for Youth is an integral part of the Directorate of Youth and Sport. It supports the existing bodies and agencies as well as following the development of social empowerment of young people and the process of creating local action plans for youth and local youth offices. At the

initiative of the Office for Youth, in all municipalities in Montenegro certain officers were appointed to deal specifically with youth issues.

The Ministry of Youth and Sport (MYS), formed in May 2007, is the main public authority in charge of youth in Serbia. Within the Ministry operates the Fund for Young Talents and Centre for Career Guidance and counselling of Young talents. On the regional level in Serbia, there is the Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sport, founded in 2004. In 2005, Provincial Secretariat adopted the Action Plan Policy for Youth in Vojvodina, through which many programs for youth were implemented. The MYS also opened six district offices for youth in Serbia, which coordinate the youth work at local level and they are entirely financed by the ministry. The local youth offices in municipalities act as the main actor in the field of youth. These offices are in charge of implementing the priorities of the National Youth Strategy. 115 out of 165 local governments recognized their importance and completed the launch of local youth offices. Also, 70 local youth offices adopted Local Youth Action Plans so far. There are also Youth Councils established in 70 municipalities. Half of the members of these councils are representatives of youth and these councils to participate in the decision making processes at the local level on youth related issues.

## **4.2 Context of youth policies and youth work**

### **4.2.1 Youth policy**

In all of the reviewed SEE countries, youth policy in the form of systematic and institutional involvement of state in caring for young people and development of special mid-term and long term related strategies and action plans that comply with European standards and priorities are in development stage, with different degrees of progress among countries.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the youth policy development at the national level is the responsibility of the Commission for Coordination of the Youth Issues in BiH (CCYI BiH). Due to the duality in administrative structure, there are differences at the entity level. Republic of

Srpska for instance has adopted the first document of Youth Policy in RS in 2006, in cooperation with Proni institute, a non-governmental structure. At the state level, in 2008 a comprehensive survey on the situation of young people in BiH was conducted based on the guidelines of CCYI BiH. As a result, the document “Coordinated Youth policy in BiH 2011-2015” was drafted to be effective at national level. However, as the entity level governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation BiH, Republic of Srpska) have almost exclusive jurisdiction at youth issues and policies, as well as financial regulations, the youth policy development and implementation at state level is facing obstacles and more efficiently handled at entities level.

Following the war in Kosovo in 1999, there have been number of programs in support of youth sector implemented by different agencies and financed by number of international donors. The major challenge for the development of efficient youth policy was the fact the sustainability and exit strategies were not well planned and made it difficult for the survival of many youth NGOs today. In 2003, Department of Youth developed Youth Policies for Kosovo. The result from the first stage was the elaboration of seven policy papers covering basic activity areas of the Youth Department. The Department of Youth of Kosovo suggested the development of a Kosovo Youth policy and Action Plan (KYAP) in 2005. In 2008 Department of Youth started a review on the draft document, to fit into the budgetary realities of the government. The drafting stage was rather participatory which included a number of events, conferences and roundtables. As a result of all these initiatives the Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan and the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth were accomplished. Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan addresses youth participation, education, employment, healthcare, safety, culture, sport and recreation. The plan also established the National Youth Action Council, as well as a co-managing Inter-ministerial Council.

In FYR Macedonia, the National Youth Strategy was adopted by the government in 2005, following wide consultations that included all main stakeholders. There is a National Steering Committee for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy, and it is composed of representatives from both the government and youth NGOs. The National Youth Strategy is

divided into eight thematic areas: Education; Youth Self Employment; Life Quality; Health and Prevention; Youth Participation; Youth Information; Culture and Local Youth Work.

Main document addressing the youth policy in Montenegro, as a newly founded republic, is the National Youth Action Plan (NYAP), adopted in 2006, for which the Ministry of Education and Science was responsible. The establishment of the National Youth Steering Committee in 2007, in line with the provisions of the NYAP was the second important step in the formation and implementation of a youth policy in Montenegro. NYAP includes the implementation of youth policies in nine areas that were identified: education, employment, health, participation in society, human rights, culture, leisure, information, mobility and family. For each of these areas, NYAP established strategic objectives, action plan and indicators for performance evaluation for a period of five years. The process and achievements in these strategic objectives are assessed and reported in Annual Action Plans. In 2008 and 2009, these plans were developed only by the members of Steering Committee due to budgetary limitations, but in 2010 and 2011, a more inclusive and participatory process with the inclusions of NGOs and youth organizations was achieved.

In the period between 2005 and 2007, there was no ministry with the specific responsibility to develop youth policy and no governmental strategy for young people in the Republic of Serbia. The Ministry of Youth and Sport was founded in 2007 and is in charge of development and monitoring of youth policy. A National Youth Strategy was adopted between May 2008 and January 2009 along with the Action plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for 2009-2014. The Action plan development process gave importance to the participation process through which different groups of young people had a chance to express their opinions. In return, this inclusion paved the way for a sense of ownership. The key themes of the plan were identified with the input of experts and through participatory activities. Special emphasis is laid upon quality leisure time and increased youth participation. The next important step is seen as the development of the Youth Law for better and systematic regulation of youth policy and to enable the establishment of an umbrella youth organization to advocate for and to represent youth interests and youth rights.

#### 4.2.2 Youth work

The term youth work and what it entails is not common knowledge in SEE countries, and each country tends to approach the term within its own national, historical and traditional perspectives. In most cases, the term 'youth work' is directly translated from English. Recognition of youth work in the form of non-formal and informal learning is almost non-existent in the reviewed countries. Although in the post conflict work, the added value of youth organizations and youth work in general succeeded in getting social recognition, the level of political recognition is extremely low. In the countries under review, youth work is used as an all encompassing definition that covers different planned activities, including extra curricular education activities, recreation, dissemination of information, sports, youth counseling, involvement in international youth projects, special support to marginalized young people through counseling, education and other forms of support.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the definition of youth work is to be found in the proposal of Federation BiH Law on Youth. The youth centres and youth clubs that are seen as main implementers of youth policy are in the hands of youth organizations and are weak in self sustainability, highly dependent on funds, mainly from international donors.

In Kosovo, youth work is undergoing change. Youth work has been enjoying high levels of social recognition; youth workers are seen by media and society as experts on a variety of youth related issues. The government is increasingly recognizing youth workers as potential partners in dealing with young people across a number of contexts. However, there is still no agreement or single definition of what youth work is in Kosovo. There are no statistics on exact number of youth workers as well as their mobility across country. General observation is that there are hundreds of individuals, volunteer and professional alike, who are engaged in work with young people in different organizations.

Similar to other countries under review, there is no official definition of Youth Work in FYR Macedonia, and there is no data on the number and work of youth workers in the country.

However, there is an initiative for recognition of the youth work and accreditation of youth workers in the official list of professions. In addition, a special studies program for Youth Work was established in one of the private universities in the country.

Youth work in Montenegro is in its earlier stages, similar with the other countries in the region. There are certain initiatives that are creating a more conducive environment for identification, and recognition of youth work by a larger audience. The active civil society, especially youth organization that are in constant cooperation with Western countries are learning more and transferring different models and applications to Montenegrin reality. An NGO forum, MNE is the frontrunner of activities for wider recognition of youth work in Montenegro. They work with Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Centre for Vocational Education, Bureau for Employment and the Ministry of Education for the social and political recognition of youth work both as a profession and an occupation. As a result of their initiatives, there are important developments on the recognition of the profession of youth worker. The occupational standards are being designed and developed by a designated expert group at the time of the reporting. However, there are still many areas left that require further development, especially in the field of non-formal education, where the competences and trainings of trainers are all ambiguous.

There exists a detailed definition of youth work in Serbia formulated by the youth workers themselves, quoted in detail in the country report. **Youth work is also seen as complementary to the formal education system.** In Serbia, there is an association of youth work practitioners, The National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (NAPOR), which was established in 2009, with the aim of setting professional standards for youth work in Serbia. The members of the association adopted the aforementioned definition in their meeting in 2009, along which they have also reached consensus on the main principles and action field in youth work. At the time of the writing of the report there were 77 youth organizations, 197 youth workers and 2249 volunteers registered to NAPOR.

### 4.2.3 Youth research

Evidence based youth policy and systematic collection of data dealing with youth are rather new practices in most of the SEE countries that are reviewed. **In most of them, it is difficult to identify up to date, valid and reliable research focusing on the situation of youth and youth policy assessment.** However, there have been numerous encouraging developments over the last decade. For instance, Bosnia and Herzegovina has conducted first encompassing research on the situation of young people, guided by the Commission for Coordination of the Youth Issues in BiH (CCYI BiH), which formed the basis of the drafting of the BiH Coordinated Youth Policy.

In Kosovo, it is hard to identify major and over time research on youth and related issues. However, there are many reports and documents that have assessed and analyzed the youth sector.

Youth research is not developed and there are no specialized researchers on youth in FYR Macedonia. However, for important activities related with youth issues and policy such as the drafting process of the National Youth Strategy and Law for Youth, certain social science experts were involved in youth research.

In Montenegro, there is no specific institution dealing with research on young people. As a result, any information sought by executive agencies is commissioned to private companies and think-tank organizations. There is also a heavy reliance on the research conducted and data generated by foreign and international organizations. One major national resource for data on youth is the Research Institute of Statistics (MONSTAT). However, the treatment of youth as a separate socio-demographic group is very problematic in the data created by MONSTAT, without clear sub groups and representative sample sizes. There are also examples of research done at smaller scales by youth NGOs, but in general they fail to meet necessary scientific criteria. However, considering the lack of information, these studies are often very useful sources of information regarding the development of strategic documents.

The establishment of the Ministry of Youth and Sport in 2007 is a turning point for youth research in the Republic of Serbia. In the period before 2007, stretching back to 1990, it is difficult to identify systematic, scientific and inclusive research based on a national sample. It is also important to underline the fact **that a comprehensive long-term research strategy for youth research as well as a research methodology is missing**. Due to the lack of research strategy, certain crucial aspects related to youth are not being followed over time either. As of 2007, the Ministry is engaged in research on different issues related to youth. The ministry organizes different public debates, and produce annual reports and analysis based on their research findings. However, as the Ministry is the only public institution that carries out such research, there is also a lack of coordinated analysis. Other institutions such as universities, think tanks and NGOs carry out youth research on irregular basis, without methodological coordination, which in return produces one off results without comparable outcomes.

#### **4.3 Legislation and provision of youth work**

At the legislative levels, the reviewed five countries are at different levels, with different preferences and priorities. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina for instance, one of the two forming entities, Republic of Srpska appears to be more engaged in legislative framework and adopted the Law on Volunteer Work in 2008, creating the legal framework for regulating the concept of volunteerism for the first time.

**Participation in European Commission youth and education programs is an important imperative for all countries under review**. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Commission for Coordination of the Youth Issues in BiH (CCYI BiH) plays a key role in promotion of European Commission youth programs, in which Bosnian organizations can participate in certain actions (Action 1, 2 and 5 of Youth in Action program).

In Kosovo there are major legislations that regulate youth work and youth policy. Law on Youth Participation and Empowerment aims at constantly advancing and reaffirming youth participation in the decision making process, without and difference or exception, in the

development of a democratic society, in order to improve quality of life of young people and of their social status. There is also the Administrative Instruction on Non-Formal Education of Youth, with the purpose to regulate and design the course plans for non-formal education of youth and the certification of non-formal and informal learning providers. It also sets the criteria for providers of non-formal education for youth. The same instruction also defines the certification of participants of non-formal education. The Administrative Instruction on Youth Councils defines the responsibilities, procedures for the establishment and the form of registration of Youth Action Councils in Kosovo. It also defines the establishment and role and responsibilities of the Central Council of Youth Action of Kosovo (CCYA), which represents Kosovo youth organizations in their dealings with the governmental bodies. And finally, there are the administrative instruction on Licensing of Youth Centres and administrative instruction on Volunteerism. The latter one regulates the rights, obligations and procedures related to voluntary work of young people. As outlined, Kosovo enjoys a rather well-detailed legislation in youth field. However, the efficiency of established structures and their impact on the society at large yet remains to be seen.

In FYR Macedonia, it is important to underline two laws in relation to youth work: Law on Volunteerism and Law on Associations and Foundations. The latter is important for youth field as it facilitates forming of groups and includes the possibility of registering associations for youth under 18. Law on youth in general and a specific law on regulation of youth organizations are currently at the proposal stage.

In Montenegro, there is no single legal act that sets the framework for youth policy. The priorities and activities within the youth policy are determined as they are outlined in the National Youth Action Plan of 2006 and the following related legislation. **There is also no legal structure for the inclusion of youth within the decision making processes on related issues.** There are different regulations being evaluated at municipal levels. However, there is a law on voluntary work, adopted by the Parliament in 2010. The law gives a definition of voluntary work and sets the time limits of volunteering (25 hours a week) as well as defines the rights and responsibilities of volunteers and organizers of volunteer work. But the Montenegrin NGOs did not endorse this law and lobbied against it. Their opposition stems from two issues;

first, the conflicts and overlaps this law creates with the existing national strategies and programs and schemes as well as the history and practice of volunteerism in Montenegro and second, the law is not considered to be in line with the European standards and recommendations. After more than one year of its adoption, the law is not applied in practice, not only due to the opposition but also due to lack of decrees and regulations. It is also clear that the full application of the law would extremely hamper the arrival and staying of international volunteers.

The legal framework regulating the civil society in Serbia has gone through a transformation recently, with the new Law of Associations defining precise rules regarding civil society organizations and their operations came into force in October 2009. The new law provides a social definition of non-profit associations and recognized a number of specific types of organizations for inclusion in a broader definition of civil society. The new law was drafted by the Ministry with the input from a wide range of legal and civil institutions and society experts, including the Council of Europe. This law provided, for the first time in Serbia, the complete legal framework for creation, status and operations of associations. However, there is no specific legislation concerning youth work. Most of the related legislation is based on the National Youth Strategy and the related Action plan. Based on this action plan, the first draft of the Law on Youth is completed in November 2010 and is expected to be presented to the government in summer 2011. The scope of the volunteer activities in Serbia is covered by the Law on Volunteerism, as adopted in March 2010 together with the Strategy for Career Guidance and Youth Counselling.

#### **4.4 Strategies, Programmes, Action Plans in youth work and non-formal education/learning**

##### **4.4.1 Youth Policy Strategy and Work Plan and Participation**

Most of the countries reviewed have some sort of programmed youth policy. These programs each have different designs and priorities and the mechanisms of their development also differ from country to country.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, following the first study on situation of youth, coordinated youth policy plan 2011-2012 is being detailed. In Kosovo, The Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan is in operation to improve the situation of young people and finding mechanisms for enhanced youth participation. It also promotes cooperation at inter-governmental level as well as among relevant actors in youth field. It is the revised version of the earlier Kosovo Youth Action Plan, with reduced activities.

In FYR Macedonia, there is no action plan or concrete steps on national level in the youth field and non-formal learning apart from what is foreseen in National Youth Strategy. There is however, political will for formal recognition of the non-formal learning and these processes depend on the area of the activity. The state is in the process of outsourcing some of its activities and services to the civil society organizations and this outsourcing process, albeit its slow progress, contributes to the recognition process of non-formal learning. In terms of youth information, there is no real network of info centres and in most of the municipalities (especially in smaller, rural ones) there are no information services for young people. Volunteering in general is on the decline, and only international volunteering opportunities are popular among young people.

Serbia and Montenegro also deal with youth policies through national strategies and action plans, which were discussed earlier.

#### **4.4.3 Major Regular Youth Events and National Programs**

Regular events and youth programs are in different stages of development in the region. Bosnia and Herzegovina for instance does not have a regular event for youth at the national

level, but at the entities level there are regular events. Republic of Srpska has an annual Youth meeting and annual RS Volunteer award. There are also kids festivals and youth events take place, but mainly in big cities such as Sarajevo and Banja Luka.

In Kosovo, there are no major regular youth events and national programmes. In FYR Macedonia, there is the Day of the Tree, a national event related with environment organized twice a year. It is organized by an NGO but supported strongly by the state both financially and logistically. There are also national festivals and camps but at very small scales.

The Republic of Serbia is very active with its cultural and sports events, and certain cultural activities are followed and attended by young people from all around Europe. The most important and famous one is the EXIT music festival, as well as the GUCA festival, which draws young people from many different countries annually. However, an annual event that focuses on the situation of youth in Serbia or a national program aimed at Serbian young people do not exist.

#### **4.5 Strategies in cross-sectorial policies**

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the cross sectorial policies are mainly aimed at youth health and prevention policies. In terms of regulations, main attention is devoted only to offenders and addicts as well as improving the status of women with respect to reproductive health. With some exceptions, the legislative treatment of vulnerable groups has been largely neglected. In addition to health issues, the other cross-sectorial strategy appears at the employment and work life matters. However, the dual entity structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina also affects these policies, with each entity coming up with its own regulations and strategies. The healthcare and employment regulations fall under the jurisdiction of the entities. Legislators and youth activists face the challenge of harmonizing certain issues between entities for the development of an effective national cross sectorial strategies.

Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan (KYEAP) is the main national strategy on youth employment and is the flagship document for youth labor policy. It aims at promoting employment among young people; to increase decent work opportunities for young people and to prevent social exclusion of youth. Each objective has its own budgetary allocation.

The National Youth Strategy (NYS) of FYR Macedonia is basically a cross sectional policy document. Several ministries are obliged to implement the strategy in parts that fall under their jurisdictions. In the national steering committee in charge of the NYS, each ministry has a representative and they are heavily engaged in strategies related with their ministry, such as strategy on health and prevention, strategy for employment, etc.

Similarly, the National Youth Strategy (NYS) is the most important cross-sectional working document in the Republic of Serbia. The document covers eleven general goals, each one decided through a participatory process and represent a priority area in the youth policy. In addition to the NYS, there are some other strategies which are directly or indirectly linked with youth that involve different public bodies. These strategies, with different titles and scopes, are in the fields of *Education and training; creativity, culture, leisure and sport; employment and entrepreneurship; social policies; health and well-being; youth justice and youth in the world.*

#### **4.6 European and International dimension**

All the country reports reviewed stated that the international and European cooperation as one of their most important priorities. In all the reports there was a clear message about the important role of the two European Institutions: the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the development of the youth policy and especially its international dimension in the countries. It is also important to note that the reviews of National Youth Policy realized in Cooperation with Council of Europe were mentioned as one of the most valuable tools for youth policy assessment and development. The European Youth Foundation was also named in most of the reports with its contributions to the development of local and international

youth work. However, the negative consequences of the reliance on foreign funding are also mentioned, namely on the sustainability and competition issues.

Bosnia and Herzegovina mainly deals with CoE and benefits from related youth programs and structures. The Commission for Coordination of the Youth Issues in BiH (CCYI BiH) is a member of European Youth Partnership since 2008. The European Commission Youth in Action program is also viewed very positively by the Bosnia and Herzegovina organizations and authorities. For the time period of 2007-2009, a total of 54 projects within Youth in Action Program were allocated to organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a total amount of funds slightly over one million Euros. The national review claims that these projects contributed significantly to the development of youth work in the country.

International cooperation is very limited in Kosovo for many youth NGOs. International organizations are generally in the role of donors and there are very few joint projects done in partnership between Kosovo based and foreign youth organizations. The strict visa regulations Kosovars face is one of the reasons of this situation. These restrictions hamper free participation of representatives of youth NGOs in various events in Europe. The Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan follow the best practices and recommendations of the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Youth Forum. SALTO Youth activities had also intensive outcomes in the past.

FYR Macedonia is striving to become a full program country within the European Commission Education and Youth programs. For that purpose, a National Agency has been established, which will be in charge of these programs. However, there are certain initial problems that led to the suspension of the activities of the national agency. The program had its pilot phase for some years and had a great impact on Macedonian youth and NGOs who have successfully benefited from different actions of the program. In terms of cooperation with Council of Europe, the Agency of Youth and Sport is the main responsible body for disseminating information on youth related programs and activities.

Youth organizations and youth workers from the Republic of Serbia are very active within the youth programs and schemes of the Council of Europe. Council of Europe and its institutions, programs and activities constitute the back bone of international engagement of Serbian youth and offer very valuable opportunities. The Ministry of Youth and Sport strongly encourages Serbian young people to participate and take part in the activities and calls of the European Youth Foundation. Serbia also has bilateral agreements with Greece and the Netherlands, which enables the realization of joint youth activities and cooperation. Similar agreements with some other European states are in the pipeline. The Serbian Ministry of Youth and Sport also organizes different international conferences and workshops on different aspects of youth field, often in cooperation with the Council of Europe. The European Commission, UN agencies and other international organizations also contribute to the development of youth work in Serbia, as well as offering opportunities for joint actions and activities. Serbia is also willing to further participation in the European Commission Youth programme, but the process is still ongoing.

#### **4.7 Budget/Funding**

Due to increasing economic difficulties, all the countries are in the process of cutting down budgets allocated for youth. The contributions of international donors and European states constitute a very major component of youth budget in certain SEE countries such as Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYR Macedonia.

The dual entities structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina creates differences in terms budget and funding issues. While Republic of Srpska had many years an open call for funding for youth organizations, there is no separate budget in Federation BiH for financial support for youth organizations or for youth in general. Many municipalities offer finance at a smaller level through public calls for NGOs or through direct funding, but unfortunately these are mainly in the more developed and bigger cities.

The budget of Department of Youth of Kosovo has been constantly growing over the past years, mainly thanks to the different donors supporting projects in youth field. Some of the donors of different youth projects include World Bank, GTZ, Mercy Corps (under USAID sponsorship), Swiss Contact.

At the national level in FYR Macedonia, the Agency of Youth and Sport finances activities through the budget of Youth department by supporting projects with the open call. However, unfortunately in 2010, due to economic crisis there was no public call for project finance for NGOs and the same holds true for 2011 as well. At the regional level there is no system of financial support for youth activities. Some municipalities offer symbolic support for some projects. In FYR Macedonia, foreign donors, international foundations and funds play an important role in the funding of youth activities as well.

In the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of Youth and Sport covers almost entire budget and spending in the field of youth. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has spent over four and a half million Euros on various youth projects towards the implementation of the National Youth Strategy since its adoption during 2008 and thus became the number one donor for the youth sector in Serbia. In this period, Ministry supported more than 260 youth organizations and organizations that deal with youth in implementation over the 500 projects. Implementation of the National Strategy for Youth is the foremost priority for the budget allocated, followed by the implementation of the Strategy for Career Guidance and Counseling, capacity building for Local Youth Offices. The youth organizations in Serbia are mainly financed through three different channels of income: public bodies such as the ministry at the national level, and the local governments at the local level. Third source of income is the international organizations and donor agencies. It is estimated that 40 per cent of the youth projects in Serbia were financed by international agencies and donors.

## **5. Trends, needs, challenges and expectations** \_\_\_\_\_

In terms of conclusion, the author of the summary report prefers to present here the original texts of the national country report writers, as they present a wide range of very important perspectives and valuable recommendations, which would be important to be presented in whole:

### **5.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**by Jasmin Jasarevic**

Since there is no youth policy in BiH it is for sure important to start as soon as possible to implement plans towards bringing such policy at State level.

Facing the needs and problems described in the "Analysis of the youth position and the youth sector in BiH" on the part of CCYI BiH, require multiple-side and well-coordinated approach by all actors responsible for youth. The Analysis provided very unfavorable assessment of existing relations, and therefore two are the prerequisites for future positive development:

- Improvement of cooperation within the country in most fields of the government sector, both vertically and horizontally.
- Multi-sectoral approach to youth problems and inter-sectoral cooperation among governmental, non-governmental and private sectors in all significant youth policies.

Through the analysis of various significant fields for the youth population, this study emphasizes several additional conclusions that must be taken into account for the overall understanding of the framework wherein the youth sector is developed in BiH:

- Insufficient institutional and legislative capacities in BiH cause delay in the EU accession process and in the reform implementation, causing also a failure to comply with commitments assumed by signing the international charters on the rights of children and youth.

- At all governmental levels there is a lack of programmatically approached support to the improvement of the condition of youth and in FBiH also a strategic approach to the support is missing.
- Systematic data collection is missing, which hinders a fact based creation and monitoring of youth policies.
- The activities adopted at the entity level are not being implemented.
- There is a lack of public space for the youth at the local level.

There is no harmonized legal definition of the youth population in BiH. In FBiH law on youth its determined that is that 15 years of age is the lower age limit and 30 years of age as the upper limit. This definition that is envisaged in the "Law on Youth Organization in the RS" said that person is young with 16 up to 30 years.

The intermediate government levels in BiH (entities and cantons) have most of the functional and fiscal competencies in the field of youth. However, the FBiH lacks youth policies both FBiH and RS lack youth action programs.

In addition, in the FBiH and in the 10 cantons within the FBiH there are no ministries in charge of the youth issues, whereas in the RS there is the Ministry for Family, Sport and Youth. There is also a difference in the legislation on youth in the two entities: the proposal of the "Law on the Youth" has not been adopted in the FBiH, while in 2004 the RS adopted the "Law on the Youth Organization of the RS".

In both entities, financial support for youth comes to some sectors and through several ministries of the entity governments. Moreover, in the RS Ministry for Family, Sport and Youth there is an allocated budget for the youth issues, while such practice is not being implemented at both the FBiH level and 10 cantons level.

At the state level, within the BiH Council of Ministers, the youth issues are addressed in terms of coordination within the country, with the international community and with the non-governmental sector. Except for the CCYI BiH, there are no significant youth-related capacities

within the BiH Council of Ministers. A positive step forward made in 2009 was that of placing the CCYI BiH within the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, in its Division for Science and Culture.

If the document Coordinated youth policy in BiH 2011-2015 is adopted by the end of 2011, that will be a positive step towards long term and systematic improvement of position of youth in BiH.

## **5.2 Kosovo**

**By Illir Hoxha**

Government policies to support youth usually focus on improving education access and standards; increasing employment opportunities; and helping develop conditions for greater participation in society as a whole. The Government of Kosovo's youth priorities are summarised in youth strategy. The document was prepared through a process of consultation and broad participation of youth and local levels. This document focuses in six issues: (i) youth participation in decision-making; (ii) education; (iii) employment; (iv) health; (v) human safety; and (vi) culture, sports and recreation.

The largest portion of funds is expected to be spent on stimulating youth employment and participation in decision-making. This trend has been promoted by government and agencies that are active in Kosovo.

Kosovo has significant needs. Some of these are related to the fact that it is a relatively poor and developing place, with very high unemployment and a very young population. Employment is a big worry for the young people of Kosovo. Even those with a university education struggle to find jobs so there is a need for business development and English Language teaching (with a particular business focus). There is also a need to change the perceptions of Kosovo and attitudes towards Kosovars outside of the country. Therefore there is a need to enhance Kosovo's ability to promote itself to the outside world. The country itself and the institutions which govern it are young and Kosovo has received substantial assistance

from international institutions and European governments. However, there is still a need for civil society to develop alongside these governmental changes.

The youth of Kosovo as the most vital segment of society, with the most potential, will play the most important part in building the future of Kosovo. Kosovo society is determined to create the most convenient social, educational, cultural, material and political conditions for the permanent welfare of young people, regardless of any ethnic, national, racial, gender, religious, social or cultural background. The youth of Kosovo share this determination and is willing to take over its responsibilities for making this vision possible. Kosovo youth are expecting to see quality improvements in the life and social status for all young people, in compliance with their requirements and interests, in accordance with European standards and best international practices. Young people should be trained and prepared for life within the community, for complete social and political independence, as a precondition for creating family life, for their full, active and accountable participation in the process of reviewing and deciding on the issues important to their life, as equal partners of the government institutions.

Unemployment and its impact on young people are serious issues that affect the development and well-being of Kosovo youth. In a region where there is high youth unemployment, young people must be recognized as a resource for progressive economic development; therefore, the Government should create mechanisms to ensure that young people are involved in the economic development strategies, and that youth issues are considered as a priority.

Youth organizations are positive towards the Youth Department, and that the Youth Department “really listens”. However, they many acknowledge the limits in what the Youth Department achieves – for example the lagging adoption and implementation of KYAP. In general a low level of trust in institutions (especially in their abilities to create change) was expressed through statements that they are not professional, not functional and not getting things done. Some representatives from youth centers and youth organizations expressed disappointment with the inability to have the KYAP adopted and implemented.

Reflecting on the risk for Kosovo Youth Network losing their independence when they transform into the National Youth Council: There is some dilemma in being a “compulsory” body proscribed by law and at the same time an independent organization, for example they could not be independent about the way they are organized or about their working relationships with the official structures.

General impression is that there are a number of strong actors working on developing the institutional framework, that there is a lot of knowledge and experience also among youth centers and organizations, that it is quite an unpredictable institutional environment (regarding adoption of plans and laws), that implementation is even more problematic than the adoption of formal frameworks and that the national level is quite well covered while the municipal levels are not. In addition, there is the problem of how the Kosovo Serb youth could participate in and benefit from any developments in the institutional framework, without /being perceived as/ accepting or promoting Kosovo independence.

Expressed needs for youth include institutional changes, donor action and priorities, networking and exchanges, improved outreach and improved capacity regarding internal organizational development as well as particular skills and activities. Institutionally, needs were expressed for standards for youth centers and youth work as well as recognition of non-formal education and the Laws for voluntary work and youth participation and empowerment. The two most commonly expressed needs of organizations are long term funding and possibilities for networking and exchanges. There seem to be the beginning of a new generation of organizations with a strong value base (Cohu, Inpo) that are ready to take a public stand on difficult issues such as corruption. They are skeptical about funding, proud to be working with only or almost only volunteers, and they are really passionate about what they are doing, especially about the role of civil society and the connection between corruption and other issues: “There are no human rights in a state run by the mafia”.

Kosovo has its long way to meet the standards of developed countries that are EU members. Having seen progress over the years this seems to be a possible mission. Many instruments

(financial and political) are bringing the region closer to EU despite setbacks and problems. It may take time but the driving force for developments in this direction will be positive attitude of population toward EU integration in the country as well as entrepreneurship spirit that is strong among population.

### **5.3 Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** **by Aleksandar Kirkovski**

It is obvious that the Youth policy and youth work in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is still in developing phase and it is closely related to political and especially economic situation in the society. As such it is influenced by the main trends in the country. Together with the reforms of the country connected with the process of EU integration there is much attention put into the strengthening institutional support and especially into law and legislation. Unfortunately economic crisis that hit the country also has influence into implementation of the policies in the youth field that means lack of implementation of the action plans. Paralleled with this, the main stakeholders especially youth NGOs are not economically independent to play bigger role in the processes (with lack of self-sustainability they are very weak and also strongly influenced by the political and economic situation). Lack of recourses, stable finances, not providing self-sustainable programs make NGO's very fragile. This is especially obvious in the times of the economic crisis when the state funds are reduced. Withdrawal of many foundations and other donors from the country and widely in the region also has a serious negative impact toward NGO's.

In correlation with the situation in the region it is reasonable to say that the situation is really similar to the situation with the rest of the countries in the Western Balkans. This means that it is far away from the situation in most of the European Union countries. There is no doubt since the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is one of the poorest countries in Europe that this has influence toward the implementation of the action plans and good practices and certainly influence especially the daily work of youth NGOs.

On the other hand with the process of EU accession there is a trend of achievement of higher standards. It is very crucial to stress the importance of EU funds that are available for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. For example Macedonian NGOs are one of the biggest users of funds from Youth in Action program. This shows capacity for both preparing and implementation of projects under the criteria of Youth in Action program.

As one of the most important perspectives for development of the youth policy and youth work is outsourcing of the state run projects, facilities etc. to the NGOs. This will give them solid bases for developing and running self-sustainable activities and programs. Related to this is the bigger awareness among citizens about the activities of the civil society and willingness to participate in them. They become key players in the field and although this is maybe not shown enough in the youth sector it will have positive results in the years to come. Certainly these are also some of the biggest challenges for the youth NGOs since they will need to show capacity to face the situation in society and to face the needs of young people in order to provide activities, programs and services that would be attractive for them. In order to be successful in this they will need to cooperate with other stakeholders and also relay on other segment on youth work. There is a need of more structural approach and bigger expertise. Unfortunately there is lack of experts working in the youth field. The situation with the researchers is not bright. Research and expertise is basically coming from the general social research. There is a clear need of focus on youth researchers and need of developing human resources active in the field with strong sense of ownership. It is clear that this is necessary for all the main actors in order to develop and deliver successful youth policy in the country. Youth NGOs are only one side of the triangle. State institution within inter-sectional cooperation must invest in their human resources in order to deliver successfully and implement into practice their part of obligations and tasks.

## **5.4 Montenegro**

**by Igor Milosevic**

At the time of writing the summary report, this section was not complete for Montenegro.

## **5.5 Republic of Serbia**

**by Nikolic Tamara**

Youth policy in Serbia is evolving very rapidly, especially on the institutional level. The main problem is a neglect of young people needs and young people themselves as a social priority in the last two decades. By the end of 80es and during the 90es, youth was no longer seen as a priority, so this was the time of almost total neglect of youth issues. In time of social and economic crisis, there was a great need for a different approach to youth, so that social response to a complex youth questions can be effective. This gap is still existing, so even thou there was a great number of civil initiatives, till the moment of establishment of the Ministry for Youth and Sport, the process of defining and establishment of youth policy and youth work in Serbia seemed to be over and over again at the beginning.

Ministry for Youth and Sport exists only for 3 years, but in that period more than 30 open calls for NGOs were conducted and more than 500 youth projects were implemented. As one study show, more than 2/3 of existing youth organizations were conducting at least one youth program at that moment, due to the constant open calls for NGOs, which is impressive comparing to the situation tree years ago. Even it is still at an early stage, the situation is rapidly changing for better.

Possibly a problem is a fact that this is basically centralized model of youth policy, because the role of the Ministry for Youth and Sport as an architect of youth policy is of great importance in this early stage. Many local self-governments realized the importance of investing in young people only after strong initiative and financial support from the Ministry. The aim of the Ministry is to strengthen local self-governments to open Local Youth offices and to implement youth policy on local level, through support of development of the Local action plans for youth. As a financial source and experience partner, international organizations such as Council of Europe and UN agencies are also very important stakeholders, very closely linked to the Ministry.

Another weakness is the fact that Serbia has no established national reporting system related to quantitative and qualitative data on youth. Existing reports are related to specific project/program/organization/institution and are allied to procedures of specific funding sources (e.g. donors, foundations, government) and/or internal procedures of organization/institutions. Yet, there is no established national reporting system that would gather all available data at national level. MYS is installing software for youth NGOs and their programs as well as software of the Fund for Young talents.

With support of Ministry of Youth and sport, as a foremost responsible institutional body, R. Serbia recently entered into process of youth work professionalization and creation of systematic professional youth care network. Due to recent foundation of National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (NAPOR), that will lead the process of recognition of youth work in Serbia. The Association is supposed to represent a mechanism for creating recommendations for more good practices and information exchange, as well as to promote the cooperation between civil organizations and, with support of the Ministry for Youth and Sport, insure the youth program's quality. But this process is still at the beginning and the standards of youth work are still not established on the national level, so there are significant differences in terms of the quality of youth programs within the different regions. Hopefully, this will be the platform for the future legislative framework of youth work in Serbia.

But still, almost all activities regarding youth work in Serbia in last two decades were conducted within the frame of civil society organizations. Those civil society organizations learned from the western models of youth work and by modification of those models, they have tried to implement them in Serbia. Youth work as such, is still unacknowledged as a profession in Serbia, but the profession of youth worker will be added in the new Nomenclature of professions in Serbia. Profession of youth worker is in accordance with the international standards ISCO- 08.

In future, Serbia is hopefully part of the EU and the basis of the youth policy are already set and developed, since all the prerequisites already exist.

## 6. Acknowledgements

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<sup>i</sup> Naming of the country is according to the Council of Europe regulations without prejudice to the fact that many member states recognize the country under its constitutional name the “Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>ii</sup> All reference to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

<sup>iii</sup> Update: The visa obstacles and difficulties of young people from the region in obtaining visas for particularly EU member states and Schengen zone are often mentioned in the report. However, some major changes and developments regarding the visa issues for citizens of SEE countries took place. As of **19-12-2009** citizens of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia travel visa free to the Schengen area; as of **15-12-2010** Visa free regime for Schengen area is introduced for all **BiH** citizens having a biometric passport.