

Youth Partnership

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



COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH POLICY IN SERBIA



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1. Context and Principles of National Youth Policy

Currently, there are approximately 1,3 million of people between the ages of 15 and 29 in the Republic of Serbia and they accounted for 18.39% of the Serbian population. Hence, young people represent a significant part of the population and are the future bearers of change. Therefore, it is necessary to pay enough attention to their needs, attitudes and wishes.

Unfortunately, during the period of mid 80's and wars and crisis in the 90's, youth issues and problems were considered as, so to speak, everybody's and nobody's concern. During that time, as a consequence of the social and economic crisis, many problems related to youth emerged: rising and long-term youth unemployment that was strongly related to an outdated system of formal education, the problem of brain-drain, poverty of youth, economic and housing dependence on parents, social exclusion of youth from the decision-making structures, low birth and marital rates, etc.

During the period 2000-2007, the responsibilities for youth in Serbia were under the Department for Youth (2001-2005) within the Ministry of Education and Sport. This Department initiated a process of development of the National Youth Strategy, but soon the department was dissolved due to the internal reorganisation of that Ministry. As a consequence, the National Youth Strategy was not finalised.

During this period, a great number of civic initiatives were undertaken by local NGOs and recommendations from Council of Europe and European Commission were adopted, stressing the fact that the systematic care for young people should be the integral part of each country's strategy, and that young people should be seen as both crucial partners in the decision-making processes and active participants to the social life of their communities. The initiative of Serbian Coalition of Youth (*Koalicija mladih Srbije*) — an unofficial umbrella organisation, was particularly interesting as it gathered a few major youth organisations to publically promote the importance of developing the National Youth Strategy.

The general impression at that stage was that Serbian society was ready to shift the focus to such issues as youth care. Considering this, it was necessary to create the conditions to promote and improve the position of youth, as well as to identify an institutional framework to address numerous youth issues. Thanks to the efforts of the initiative Serbian Coalition of Youth, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (hereafter MYS) was created in May 2007, responsible for to youth and sport matters. With the establishment of the Ministry, as a government body to regulate and address youth issues, the institutional framework was created for dealing with youth issues in Serbia and development and implementation of a coherent national youth policy. The Ministry was formed by “popular demand” putting the interests of youth in the first place. That way, the Republic

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of Serbia took the lead in the region in terms of an institutional framework for youth policy. Since it was created in an open process, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has chosen participation, visibility and continuous consultation with civil society sector as its core principles. The National Youth Strategy (hereafter *NYS*) was adopted the very next year (2008) in an open process, along with the Action Plan for its implementation the year after that. In accordance with an accepted strategic framework, during the next years numerous local youth offices were formed, the Law on Youth was adopted as well as local youth action plans.

After the Action Plan of the first National Youth Strategy had expired (2009-2014), the second National Youth Strategy was adopted in 2015. National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 represents a comprehensive document outlining the priority objectives contributing to an active and equal participation of young people in various areas of social life. The NYS is a key mechanism for the implementation, co-ordination and promotion of youth policy that creates a supportive environment where youth initiatives are encouraged and appreciated. The main principles of newly adopted NYS are the following: support for personal and social empowerment of youth; respect for human and minority rights, equality and non-discrimination; equal opportunities for all; importance of young people and their social roles; active youth participation and co-operation as well as social responsibility and solidarity.

The NYS defines nine strategic goals to be achieved with respect to young people. The successful implementation of NYS in the next ten years will result in the improvement of:

- Employability and employment of young women and men
- Quality and opportunities for acquiring qualifications and development of competencies and innovation of young people
- Active participation of young women and men in society
- Health and well-being of young women and men
- Conditions for the development of youth safety culture
- Support to social inclusion of young people at risk of social exclusion
- Mobility, scope of international youth co-operation and support for young migrants
- System of informing young people and knowledge about young people
- Consumption of culture and participation of youth in the creation of cultural programmes.

During its drafting, The Government has appointed a multi-sectoral Working Group with 53 members. There were 15 round tables with the aim to discuss the first draft of the Strategy, as well as five debates in the public discussions in Serbia, with the participation of more than 2000 young people. Both, the recommendations from the evaluation of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy

2008-2014, done by international and national experts, and the recommendations from the Review of the Youth Policy prepared by the experts of the Council of Europe, made on the initiative of the MYS, were included in the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, as they represent a measure of success of previous work and guidelines for effective implementation in the coming years.

The basic approach of the MYS is that the youth policy should become an integral part of the national political agenda and raise awareness of the problems that young people are facing in the Republic of Serbia. Thus, on 24 January 2014, the Government issued a decision on the establishment of the Youth Council, a cross-sectorial advisory body on youth issues, taking a significant step forward in the monitoring and further development of the national youth policy.

Youth Council is an advisory body, established by the Government at the proposal of the MYS, which promotes and coordinates the activities related to the development, implementation of youth policy, and proposes measures for its improvement. In order to co-ordinate the implementation of youth policy in the territory of the autonomous province and local self-government unit, the competent authority of the autonomous province and the relevant local government authority may establish a provincial, city and municipal youth council, in accordance with the Law on Youth.

The Youth Council consists of the following representatives:

1. Representatives of the MYS;
2. Representatives of other ministries dealing with youth;
3. The autonomous province secretariat responsible for youth;
4. Relevant experts in the youth field;
5. Representatives of youth associations;
6. Representatives of Local Youth Offices;
7. Representatives of national minorities;
8. Young people comprise at least one third of the Youth Council and the selection of the NGO member of the Youth Council was conducted via an open call by the MYS.

2. Statistics on Young People

According to the last Population Survey from 2011, there was a total of 1.322.021 young people aged 15 to 29 and they accounted for 18.39% of the Serbian population¹. Under the Law on Youth of the Republic of Serbia, 'youth' is defined as people aged 15-30 and thus in Serbia 1,419,328 is seen as the official number of young people, making 19.74% of the population. According to the same data, the share of the population aged 15-30 has dropped by 1.8% between 2002 and 2011. This decline might be attributed to the low birth rate and increased emigration of young people, essentially mirroring developments in other parts of Europe. Furthermore, young people are unevenly distributed across the country. Migration within Serbia, whereby young people move to larger towns and to the capital in search of study and work opportunities unavailable in their rural communities, has increased the pace of population ageing in rural localities. All available information regarding the statistical database for the Republic of Serbia is published on the website <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/>.

The education structure of young adults in Serbia aged 25 to 29 for whom we assume have completed the process of education, is as follows: elementary school education and lesser accounts for 6.5%, secondary school education - 69.7%, while tertiary - 22.7% of young people.²

The EU statistics show that the youth unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24, in July 2015 was 20.4% in the EU28 compared with 22% in July 2014. For comparison, in Serbia the youth unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 in the second quarter of 2015 was 43.1% and even 53.4% in the second quarter of 2014, which is more than double having in mind EU statistics. The additional problem in Serbia is the inactivity of young people in the labour market. In August 2014, the inactivity rate of young people aged between 15 and 24 was 71.2%, while the inactivity rate of young people aged between 15 and 30 was 52.87%.³ Also, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia recorded that 20.01% of young people aged 15-24 belonged to the NEET category in the Republic of Serbia in 2014.

¹ Statistical office of the Republic of Serbia, <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/>, data on Kosovo and Metohija are excluded

² Young people in Serbia 2015, Situation, perceptions, beliefs and aspirations, Smiljka Tomanović and Dragan Stanojević, Belgrade, 2015

³ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Labour Force Survey (2014, 2015), <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/>
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3. Actors and Structures

3.1 Public Authorities

3.1.1 National Public Authorities: Ministry in Charge of Youth

Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia

Minister of Youth and Sports: Mr. Vanja Udovicic

Duration of mandate: 2014-2016

Youth department within the Ministry: Sector for Youth

The Sector for Youth performs tasks related to: system development and improvement of youth policy and implementation of national policy; preparation and implementation of the National Youth Strategy and its action plan; the scope of work of the Fund for Young Talents; Stimulating young people gather and participate in the social life, as well as protecting their interests and helping them to fulfil their interests; providing guidance to young people and training them for employment and volunteer work; encouraging non-formal education for young people; co-operation with youth organisations and associations in organising international youth events and conferences in the Republic of Serbia; assistance and co-operation with youth organisations and associations in their work and the promotion of youth policy and youth organisations and associations; enabling youth organisations and associations in the Republic of Serbia to participate in conferences and events for young people abroad; encouraging international co-operation related to youth; monitoring and evaluation of the position and role of young people in the Republic of Serbia; creating conditions for the establishment and operation of national and regional youth offices; encouraging the development of youth policies and work of youth offices at the local level, as well as other functions from the Department.

Number of people who work in the Sector for Youth: 9

Assistant Minister responsible for Sector for Youth: Ms. Snezana Klasnja

Contact person in the Ministry in charge for European Youth Policy: Ms. Snezana Klasnja, Ms. Aleksandra Knezevic, member of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Youth

The Ministry for Youth and Sports website is www.mos.gov.rs

E-mail: kabinet@mos.gov.rs

The Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia

The Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia was established by the Government of Republic of Serbia with the aim of supporting most successful students, who excelled in their academic achievements with hard work, effort and persistence. Since August 2008 the Fund has been working and operating within MYS and the president of the Fund is Vanja Udovicic, the Minister of Youth and Sport.

On the basis of the Resolution on the Establishment of the Fund, its main activities are:

- awarding scholarships to top Serbian postgraduate students in EU and EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries and students at the world's leading universities – amount of scholarship is approximately 10.000,00 euro and is awarded separately for each academic year;
- awarding scholarships to top students at the universities in the Republic of Serbia – amount of scholarship is 250,00 euro per month and scholarships are awarded for the period of 10 months, or one academic year;
- awarding of prizes to high school pupils for outstanding success achieved in competitions in the Republic of Serbia and abroad – amount of the awards for pupils goes from 160,00 up to 1.650,00 EUR.

Since 2008, when the Fund was established within the MYS, more than 17 000 young people from Serbia have been supported with approximately 38 million EUR invested in their education. So far, the Fund has awarded and granted scholarships:

- over 6800 awards to high school pupils for their outstanding successes achieved in competitions in the Republic of Serbia and abroad;
- over 2800 scholarships to university students who continued their studies abroad;
- over 7300 scholarships to top university students at the universities in Republic of Serbia.

The Fund has established successful co-operation with major companies and institutions in the Republic of Serbia in order to enable discounts and benefits for its scholars. So far, the Fund has signed 20 co-operation protocols. The protocols are dedicated to professional development of the best students, Fund's scholar, and their professional development throughout internship programmes with possibility of later employment. Therefore the goal of these protocols is to provide young talents with the opportunity to make a successful business career in Serbia.

3.1.2 Other National Public Bodies who are directly involved in Youth Policies

Other ministries have certain responsibilities on youth issues. For example, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development is responsible for the area of formal education. For employment and social policy, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Economy are responsible. Other ministries involved in youth issues are the Ministry of Justice (juvenile delinquency) and Ministry of the Interior (youth safety), the Ministry of Health (youth health), the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The official website of the Serbian Government is: www.srbija.sr.gov.rs

Parliamentary Board in charge for youth issues:

Committee on Education, Science, Technological Development and the Information Society

Chairperson: Aleksandra Jerkov (Democratic Party)

For more information: <http://www.parlament.gov.rs/narodna-skupstina-/sastav/radna-tela/odbori.62.895.html>

3.1.3 Regional Public Authorities with Competencies in the Youth Field

In terms of administrative and territorial division, the Republic of Serbia is divided into provinces, districts, administrative areas, the City of Belgrade, cities and municipalities. The territorial organisation of Serbia includes five statistical regions (Belgrade region, Vojvodina region, Sumadija and western Serbia region, eastern and southern Serbia region and Kosovo-Metohija region). They include the City of Belgrade as a separate territorial unit established by the Constitution and law, and 30 districts, 24 cities, 30 urban municipalities, 150 municipalities, 6,158 villages and 193 urban settlements.

The Republic of Serbia has two territorial autonomies, Autonomous Province ([AP Vojvodina](#)) and [AP Kosovo-Metohija](#). In the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, the importance of youth and youth policy was recognised in 2002 with the establishment of the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth.

In November 2012, the Youth Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina was established on the initiative of the Secretariat for Sports and Youth with the aim to encourage and co-ordinate the activities related to the development, realisation and implementation of youth policy and propose measures for their improvement. With the establishment of such an inter-sectoral body at the highest level, the importance of this kind of co-operation and involvement of youth in policy-making has been

fully recognised. At a provincial level, it is also important to mention the Action Plan for Youth Policy in AP Vojvodina for the period 2015-2020, developed by the Provincial Secretariat for Sport and Youth.

For more information: <http://www.sio.vojvodina.gov.rs/>.

3.1.4 Local Public Authorities with Competencies in the Youth Field

Municipalities are the main administrative units with local self-government. Many municipalities recognised youth as one of their priorities and developed/adopted Local Youth Action Plans (hereafter LYAP) and/or established Local Youth Offices (hereafter LYO).

The Local Youth Office is a part of the local government and is the first link in a chain of stakeholders, marking the beginning of the development of youth policy in Serbian municipalities and cities. Prior to the establishment of the MYS, only five proactive local governments had recognised young people as a resource and understood the need to actively involve them in community life. The process of LYO establishment and the development of strategic documents is considered one of the most intensive and most inclusive processes of youth policy development in the recent history of Serbia's public administration.

The Local Youth Offices, as the units within municipalities, have responsibility to:

- Plan, implement and monitor the development of youth policy at the local level;
- Initiate and monitor the implementation of the Local Action Plan for Youth;
- Establish co-operation with all the relevant partners and work on their networking, communication and co-ordination;
- Inform young people on issues that are relevant for them;
- Encourage youth activism, communicate with young people, youth and youth-oriented associations and ensure youth participation in decision-making processes;
- Support initiatives of young people and youth and youth-oriented associations;
- Support the implementation of programmes and projects for informal education of youth;
- Support the work of the Youth Council and Youth Clubs;
- Conduct research about youth needs, trends, vulnerable groups of youth and their inclusion;
- Keep a database on active youth and youth-oriented associations and informal youth groups.

Since 2007, a total of 158 municipalities have established LYO, but at this moment 139 of them are active. It should also be noted that the capacity and structure of LYOs are not the same. Some of them have specified position for the Local Youth Coordinator in job classification of the municipality, while others do not, so Coordinators have to work on other contractual basis or as volunteers. The

allocated budgets for local youth policy also vary depending on level of local development as well as on political will.

Cooperation and partnership with towns and municipalities in Serbia were supported by the MYS, through:

- Professional and technical support to local self-government units to establish LYO , awareness-raising on the significance and domain of LYO activities, and assistance in creating foundation acts and establishing local Youth Councils;
- Training of LYO Coordinators – during the previous period, MYS provided it either on its own, or in cooperation with international partners (Council of Europe, German Organisation for International Cooperation, USAID, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, United Nation agencies, British Council, Kingdom of Norway, Republic of Italy, Kingdom of the Netherlands), a series of trainings for Coordinators of newly founded LYO;
- Assistance in preparation of Local Action Plan for youth;
- Financing local self-government units project;
- Establishing the system and quality of work of LYO through publishing and dissemination of the brochure „Guidelines for implementation of NSY on the local level – competencies of LYO Coordinator“;
- Providing assistance to local self-government units and LYO in establishing joint representative body – National Associations of Local Youth Offices.

A long-term objective of the MYS is that every local self-government in Serbia has established a LYO and become a reliable partner for the implementation of youth policy on local level.

3.2 Youth Welfare Services (Comprising Public and/or Non Public Actors)

3.2.1 Centres for Social Work

There are in total 136 Centres for social work in the Republic of Serbia. They are basic public services providing legal and social protection to children and young people at the local level. They assess the eligibility of parents during a divorce, assess the potential foster parents or assess juvenile delinquents' personality and social context during the court proceedings, acting in the best interest of the child or young person.

As the main target groups of beneficiaries, the Centres have:

- Children/youth without parental care;
- Children/youth who are victims of abuse and severe neglect;

- Children/youth from families with troubled relationships;
- Children/youth with behavioural disorders;
- Children/youth with special needs.

3.2.2 Youth Counselling Offices

The main task of the Youth Counselling Office is prevention mental hygiene work with young people as well as advising and psychotherapeutic counselling to prevent and eliminate their psychological and adaptive difficulties. The goal of preventive action is to acquaint young people with the essential characteristics of development in the period of youth, all difficulties and challenges that occur in this period as well as the ways of avoiding and overcoming them.

Young people are provided help to cope with the environment where they live and act (family, school, the workplace and society in general). Youth Counselling Office is open and available to every young person, referral is not required, the services are free and the secrecy of conversation is guaranteed. The most common problems and challenges young people face with and which turn them to the Youth Counselling Office are: failure at school and studies, experience loneliness and rejection, insecurity, undermined confidence, fear of new situations, unwillingness to risks, emotional difficulties, problems in relationships with peers and the opposite sex, sexual difficulties, disappointment in love, conflicts with parents, etc.

3.3 Non-public Actors/Structures & Youth Services with Competencies in the Youth Field

3.3.1 Serbian Youth Umbrella Federation

According to the Law on Youth, Serbian Youth umbrella federation is the highest independent representative body of youth in a country. It is founded and joined by youth organisations (organizations of young people, which work with youth, for youth, and in the interest of youth) in order to achieve the following objectives (which they could not attain individually):

- strengthening the negotiation positions of youth in relation to the State and its youth policies, improving mechanisms for the participation of youth in decision-making;
- improving mechanisms for the representation of global socio-economic, educational, cultural and other interests of young people;
- helping youth and youth organizations be more informed ensuring greater and more comprehensive information flow;
- providing a basis for the participation of young people in international forums.

The Umbrella federation may consist of at least 60 registered associations having their head offices on the territory of at least 2/3 of counties in Serbia and which have at least 2000 individual members of whom at least 2/3 are young people. At this stage, there is no youth federation in Serbia that meets the above mentioned requirements.

The main MYS partners within the civil society at the national level are: National Youth Council of Serbia (Krovna organizacija mladih Srbije - KOMS) as the highest representative body of the young population, National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (Nacionalna asocijacija praktičara/ki omladinskog rada - NAPOR), an association of youth organisations created with the aim to ensure the quality of youth work programmes and the National Association of Local Youth Offices.

3.3.2 National Youth Council of Serbia

National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS) is an umbrella association of the youth organisations in Serbia and it represents 87 member organisations. It is a member of the European Youth Forum. It started modestly in 2003 with only five organisations, but by 2006 KOMS had turned into a powerful advocacy body cooperating with other non-governmental organisations and government bodies. Its mission is to represent the interests of young people through developing a partnership with the state, inter-agency and international co-operation, encouraging the active participation of young people, and the organisational development of its members. KOMS is dedicated to empowering youth organisations through networking and training and through the provision of evidence based policy supported by publishing. Its projects have included mobilising youth votes, training on youth policy and advocacy, awareness campaigns, youth research representation, and there are estimates that 150.000 young people are reached indirectly through KOMS' actions every year.

There are five full-time young people working in the Secretariat and their funding is project-based, supplemented by membership fees. KOMS is trying to lead inclusive policy making via invitations to the members of the unions and political parties to be involved in consultative processes.

3.3.3 The National Association of Youth Work Practitioners

The National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (NAPOR), established in 2009, is one of the major actors in the professionalisation of the non-governmental youth sector in Serbia. It consists of 90 associations (80 full and 10 associate members) that can bring together around 200 youth workers on the national level. NAPOR conducts training for youth workers and awards their

accreditation, adding to the recognition of youth workers as professionals. The process is guided and governed by a handbook for accreditation and the Council for Ethical Questions.

3.3.4 National Association of Local Youth Offices

National Associations of Local Youth Offices is a network of local youth offices (currently comprising 72 youth offices) established in 2014, in order to ensure the quality of youth policy at the local level. The mission of the National Association of Local Youth Offices is creating the network of its members, contributing stronger to positioning local youth offices as a sustainable system and the constant improvement of the capacity of all LYO in order to create the same conditions for realising the potential of every young man in Serbia.

3.3.5 Youth NGOs

One of the priorities of the MYS strengthening the non-governmental sector working on youth, as a way of stimulating a more active participation of young people in all spheres of the social life. In that sense, MYS had conducted many open competitions and calls - for NGOs to include them in the process of development of the NYS, Action plan and Law on Youth. Through the implementation of NGO projects (financing and co-financing projects of civil society organisations in the area of youth policy), capacity building of newly formed youth NGOs and LYO, international and technical co-operation and youth research, MYS implements youth policy together with other partners.

From 2007 and establishment of the MYS, more than four hundred youth organisations and organisations dealing with youth were financially supported by MYS implementing around 1200 projects/programmes for youth. At this moment, MYS data conveys 1090 youth organisations, organisations for youth and their federations registered in Serbia. The difference between 'youth organisations' and 'organisations for youth' is based on the number of young people in the membership. If an organisation has less than 2/3 of the members who are young (age 15-30), it is an organisation for youth. If it has 2/3 or more members who are young, then it is youth organisation. The list of registered organisations and associations, with detailed information about them, is available on the official website of the MYS and it is updated on a monthly basis (<http://www.mos.gov.rs/o-ministarstvu/sektor-za-omladinu/pravilnik-o-evidenciji-i-lista-evidentiranih-udruzenja/?lang=lat>).

In accordance with the Law on Youth, the Minister of Youth and Sports brought Rules on the Contents and Method of Keeping Integrated Records on Youth Associations and their Federations. Thus, since 2012, the Ministry has kept a unique database of youth organisations, organisations for youth and their federations registered in Serbia. After registering, those organizations are entitled to apply for funding on regular open calls that the Ministry announces annually.

3.3.6 Pupils' Parliament

Pupils' Parliament is a representative body within schools across Serbia, established, led and composed by the pupils themselves. Its establishment, although not mandatory, is freely and legally guaranteed, and the school in which a Parliament functions is required to ensure the freedom of organisation.

By the Law on the Fundamentals of Education System, primary and secondary schools should have their own Pupils' Parliament. The rights of children and students in education include the right of association in different groups and clubs, as well as forming of Pupils' Parliament in the last two grades of primary school and in all grades of secondary school. Most of the Pupils' Parliaments in Serbia were constituted in 2003 and 2004, and, therefore, the majority of primary and secondary schools have their own Pupils' Parliament. However, there is still no umbrella organization of Pupils' Parliament in Serbia.

The role and objectives of Pupils' Parliament are:

- 1) Giving opinion and suggestions to the school management, School Board and Council of Parents, as well as to the principals of the school, about the rules of behaviour in school, Annual school Curriculum, leisure and extracurricular educational activities, participation in sport, leisure activities and contests;
- 2) Co-operation between students and teachers;
- 3) Providing information regarding issues of interest for students;

Pupils' Parliament in schools consists of two students from each class of the school. The members and the president of the Council are elected at the beginning of each school year. The Programme of Pupils' Parliament is an integral part of the Annual school Curriculum. Pupils' Parliament has the possibility of uniting and building alliances amongst each other.

Although many experts consider Pupils' Parliament as the first step towards the inclusion of youth in society and democratic processes, administrative structures in schools still do not recognise the importance of Pupils' Parliament. Consequently, pupils are given only advisory or observant role in the decision-making processes. Finally, no budget is provided for the activities of Pupils' Parliament.

3.3.7 Student Conference of the Serbian Universities

Student Conference of the Serbian Universities is the highest representative body of university students in Serbia, provided by Article 22 of the Law on Higher Education, in order to achieve common interests of students as partners in the process of higher education in Serbia and to establish a common policy of students' parliaments in universities in Serbia. Student Conference of

the Serbian Universities is composed of the representatives of the students' parliaments in Serbia. The mission of this student's body is to help students to jointly push for better study conditions and quality student life. Since 2012, Student Conference of the Serbian Universities has been a full member of the European Students' Union (ESU).

3.4 National Network(s) for Knowledge on Youth linking all Actors in the Field (Policy Makers, Researchers, Young People and their Organisations, NGOs)

Apart from a few initiatives for establishing university Youth Work Study Programme, there is currently only one course on the Sociology Department, Bachelor Programme (University of Belgrade, state university) – “Sociology of Youth” as an optional course (for more information, please visit English web page:

http://www.f.bg.ac.rs/en2/sociology/program_predmet_eng.php?IDK=2975&SP=301). There are no on-going MA or PhD programmes in this area.

4. Legislation

4.1 Law on Youth

The Law on Youth (Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia, No 50/11) was adopted by the Serbian Parliament on July 5, 2011. The Law defines the framework and conditions for supporting young people in organising, social activities, developing and reaching potentials for personal and social benefit, definition of the youth sector structure, both on national and Non-Government level, with clearly specified competencies, rights, obligations and responsibilities, depending on the level of reference, recognising the autonomy of youth associations, alliances and umbrella associations. The Law stipulates establishing of the Youth Council of the Republic of Serbia, where young people will be represented together with other principal subjects in this area, and also establishing youth councils on the provincial and local level. In addition, the Law on Youth defines the role of Youth Offices, and for the first time determines public interest in the youth sector domain at the republic, provincial and local level. The Law is harmonised with the European youth policy framework and provides a possibility for setting up a Youth Agency for the purpose of full implementation of the EU programme dedicated to youth.

During preparation of the Law, the Ministry of Youth carried out a wide consultation process, which is a more difficult path but is also the path leading to better results. Consulting those that the Law will refer to is a part of the value system that the Ministry wants to establish in Serbia, and also the way to recover the confidence in institutions among youth. In the course of preparation of the Draft law,

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two stages of consultation process were carried out, with the participation of all relevant youth policy stakeholders. During the first stage of the process, with the inclusion of LYO, 45 round tables were organised, with participation of 1,500 young people of youth organisations and local institutions. Taking into account the results of this process and the analysis of local and European legislation, the first draft of the Law was created. In the second stage, 29 round tables took place in the regions of Serbia, with over 1,000 participants, which lead to creating the new Draft Law on Youth. Public hearings took place in six cities, according to the programme adopted by the Government Board for Public Services and upon suggestion of the Ministry. Young people took active participation in all stages of the Law preparation, from the very beginning, in January 2010. Most solutions included in the adopted Law are the result of the requests of young people expressed during the consultation process.

Since February 2015, a Working Group for has been preparing a Draft Law on amendments to the Law on Youth. The main is to improve the legal framework for youth policy implementation (mechanisms for empowerment and greater participation of young people in society; enhancing the role and responsibility of the umbrella organisation; possibilities of establishment institutions in the field of youth policy; youth offices' quality of work; professionalisation of youth work; financing programmes and projects of public interest; and the monitoring and evaluation of the National Youth Strategy and Local Action Plans' implementation as a foundation for evidence based decision making). It is expected that the National Assembly will adopt the Draft Law in third quarter of 2016.

Other laws relevant for national youth policy include:

- Law on the Fundamentals of Education System (Official Gazette of RS, no. 72/09, 52/11 and 55/13)
- Law on Adult Education (Official Gazette of RS, no. 55/13)
- Law on Higher Education (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 76/05, 97/08 / see also Article 2/, 44/10 /see also Articles 32-35/, 93/12 /see also Articles 6 and 7/ and 89/13. See: Authentic Interpretation - 100/ 07-4. See: Decision - CC RS IU no. 380/05 - 53/11-104)
- Law on Volunteering (Official Gazette of RS, no. 36/10), Law on Associations (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 51/09 and 99/11 – as amended)
- Law on Cooperatives (Official Gazette of FRY, nos. 41/96 and 12/98 and Official Gazette of RS, nos. 101/05 – as amended and 34/06)
- Law on Weapons and Ammunition (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 9/92, 53/93, 67/93, 48/94, 44/98, 39/03, 101/05 – as amended, 85/05 – as amended, 27/11 – CC Decision and 104/13 – as amended);

- Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 85/05, 88/05 – corrigendum, 107/05 - corrigendum, 72/09, 111/09, 121/12, 104/13 and 108/14)
- Law on Antidiscrimination (Official Gazette of RS, no.22/09), etc.

4.2 Regional and Local Legislation on Youth

Since 2008, Local Youth Action Plans have been adopted by 145 local municipalities in Serbia while, at this moment, 91 of them are valid, as well as the Provincial action plan by the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

Although the work of LYO should be developed in relation to these Local Youth Action Plans, there are still lots of them that have not adopted their Local Youth Action Plans, mainly for financial reasons. More frequently, LYO do have a Local Youth Action Plan, but no implementation strategy. Financial resources from the national and local government clearly need to be allocated for the implementation of the Local Youth Action Plans, but there is often a shortfall in the necessary resources, possibly as a consequence of a lack of political will to allocate sufficient funds for effective provision.

5. National Policy Programmes on Youth

5.1 National Programme for Youth Employment by 2020

Having in mind that 43,3% of young people aged 15-24 in 2015 were unemployed and even 71% were inactive, MYS in co-operation with youth representatives from the NGO sector (KOMS and NAPOR) started consultations with leading Serbian companies on the problems they are facing with when employing young people, as well as finding favourable opportunities for youth employment. Based on data obtained in a consultative process with 38 largest private companies, MYS took over the co-ordination of developing a comprehensive National Programme for Youth Employment 2020 that is consistent with other policies and strategies of the Republic Serbia, as well as with similar EU documents.

The main objective of the National Programme for Youth Employment 2020 is contribution to the change in values, increasing the quality of youth labour force and thus enhancing youth employment in Serbia. The purpose of the Programme is to consolidate the existing state policies in the field of education and employment of young people, recognise new trends and establish more efficient and effective mechanisms for cross-sectoral co-operation on achieving the objectives of youth employment by 2020. This programme will be serving as a central document for informing all stakeholders in youth employment policy, but also for developing recommendations for youth employment programmes.

Four outcomes are expected:

1. Young people are informed and have positive values and attitudes about work in general;
2. Young people have applicable knowledge, skills and key competencies;
3. Serbia has a national programme of internships;
4. The number of young entrepreneurs and employed young people is growing.

5.2 Action Plans i.e. Official Strategies

Beside NYS and Action Plan for its implementation, other documents relevant for the national youth policy are: National Employment Strategy 2011-2020; Strategy of Career Guidance and Counselling; Adult Education Development Strategy; Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education; Adult Education Strategy; Strategy of Scientific and Technological Development; Youth Health Strategy; Public Health Strategy; Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Chronic Non-communicable Diseases; Strategy for Continuous Improvement of Health Care Quality and Patient Safety; Strategy for Improving the Status of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia; Strategy for the Development of Mental Health Care; Strategy on HIV Infection and AIDS; Strategy on Sports Development in the Republic of Serbia; National Strategy for Sustainable Development; Strategy on Implementing the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters; National Security Strategy; Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence; Strategy for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women in Family and in Intimate Partner Relationships; Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Discrimination; Strategy of Protection and Rescue in Emergency Situations; National Strategy for Combating Corruption; Strategy for Small Arms and Light Weapons Control; Social Welfare Development Strategy; Poverty Reduction Strategy; National Social Housing Strategy; Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia; National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and Promoting Gender Equality; Strategy for the Development of Public Information System; Strategy for the Development of Information Society; Strategy for the Development of Electronic Communications; Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics; Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking in the Republic of Serbia; Migration Management Strategy; and corresponding action plans, local action plans and other relevant regulations and policies.

6. Budget / Public Expenditure Allocated to Youth

6.1 National Level

The total funds planned for the three-year period (2015-2017) amount to RSD 6,034,369,460, with RSD 3,865,064,460 in budget funds and RSD 2,169,305,000 in funds from other sources. This amount should be increased by part of the funds earmarked for the implementation of the active employment policy measures (total earmarks under appropriation 464-RSD 2,800,000,000), to be used for youth and that cannot be expressed to its exact amount in advance because it is earmarked in accordance with active policy measures, not age groups, as well as part of the funds earmarked in the Budget Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Promotion of Employment of Persons with Disabilities (total earmarks under appropriation 464-RSD 500,000,000) to be used for youth with disabilities that cannot be expressed in advance to its exact amount because it is earmarked for professional rehabilitation and promotion of employment of persons with disabilities, not according to age groups.

The funds for the implementation of the NYS are provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the budget of the autonomous province and local self-government units (hereinafter: LSG) and other sources in accordance with statutory regulations, with the planned contribution of European Union IPA funds, the participation of the private sector, associations implementing youth activities and other national and international programmes and donors. In accordance with the NYS, the autonomous province and LSGs determine action plans for the implementation of the NYS within their territory and provide funds for the implementation of such plans within their budget.

6.2 Local Level

Information is not available because municipalities do not have legal obligation to assign certain amount of money for youth issues. However, each municipality has a legal obligation under the budget line 481 to allocate resources to the civil sector each year (NGOs, sport and religious organizations and alliances, etc.), but the total amounts of this grant vary from one municipality to other.

7. European Dimension of Youth Policy

Important international partners in implementing youth policy in Serbia are the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the UN Agencies (IOM, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA) and other international organizations such as the German Association for International Co-operation, the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation, and others.

7.1 Council of Europe

Regarding youth policy, through the cooperation with Council of Europe, Serbia accessed to the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through Youth Card and The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. Ministry of Youth and Sports is also encouraging young people to be creative and to participate in the open calls of the European Youth Foundation and different activities in The European Youth Centres in Budapest and Strasbourg, by providing information through the website.

The representative of MYS is a member of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Youth. Also, the representative of MYS was chairing the Council of Europe's Co-ordination Board on Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility and Programmes Board on Youth in period 2008-2014 and now is elected member of the follow-up group for the European No Hate Speech Movement campaign.

The MYS has also delegated its representative as the national correspondent in The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYC) and actively participate in other activities organised within the EU-CoE youth partnership.

7.2 European Union

As a partner country, Serbia participates in the EU programmes for co-operation in the field of youth (Erasmus+) and youth organisations have already successfully participated in the Youth in Action Programme. During the period from 2007 to 2014, the co-operation and financial support of the MYS to the Contact Point, NGO assisting in supporting applicants in using the possibilities offered by Youth in Action Programme, has resulted in 317 projects approved from Serbia for a total of over 5.5 million EUR.

During 2015, within the framework of the youth component of the Erasmus+, EU supported 35 international youth projects from Serbia with 1.5 million EUR. Within those projects, in Serbia youth initiatives will be realised in the field of intercultural education, sports, employment, entrepreneurship, sustainable development, media, rural development and youth work. The Republic of Serbia ended 2015 as the most active country in the Western Balkans with 36 accredited organisations and youth offices for participating in the European Voluntary Service. Through the European voluntary service, young people from Serbia can live, learn and volunteer in the 33 countries of Europe, and young people from other countries may live in Serbia up to 12 months.

At this moment, Ministry of Youth and Sport, in close co-operation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development is undertaking all necessary steps and measures for

establishing a national structure for the implementation of Erasmus+ Programme, which is a precondition for closure of the Negotiation of Chapter 26 – Education and Culture, within EU accession process.

In 2014, the Republic of Serbia contributed to the EU report on youth, which is positively rated in the last Serbia progress report by the European Commission. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has coordinated the process of drafting the national report with the participation of all relevant authorities and institutions as well as civil society organisations.

7.3 Regional Initiatives

In order to intensify regional co-operation in the youth field and in line with the Serbian Prime Minister' initiative at the Western Balkans Conference (Berlin, August 2014), the activities related to launching a Regional Youth Co-operation Office have been underway. During the Vienna Conference, in late August 2015, the Joint Declaration on Regional Youth Co-operation was signed between six Western Balkan's Governments. The declaration foresees the establishment of the Regional Youth Co-operation Office in order to promote the idea of reconciliation, tolerance, co-operation and other European values among young people in the Balkan region. Representative of MYS took part in a fact finding mission to Franco-German youth office secretariats both in Paris and Berlin, organised for the Western Balkans' youth representatives and ministries dealing with youth issues in July 2015. The special Working Group was established and had two meetings in 2015 with the aim to prepare document that defines the mission, structure, activities and funding of future Regional Youth Co-operation Office.

8. Further sources of information on youth policy in Serbia

Web presentations of relevant institutions

- Council of Europe Office in Serbia, <http://www.coe.org.rs/>
- Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, <http://europa.rs/eng/>
- National Erasmus+ Office in Serbia, <http://erasmusplus.rs/erasmus-office-in-serbia/>
- Fund for Young Talents, <http://www.mos.gov.rs/dositeja/?lang=lat>
- Government of the Republic of Serbia, <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/>
- KOMS (National Youth Council of Serbia), <http://www.koms.rs/>
- Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, <http://www.mos.gov.rs/>
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/>
- *Mladi su Zakon*, <http://www.mos.gov.rs/mladisuzakon/index.php/2013-07-15-16-02-23/mladi-su-zakon/resurs-centri>

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- NAPOR (National Association of Youth Work Practitioners), <http://napor.net/>
- No Hate Speech Campaign in Serbia, <http://www.nemrznji.rs/>
- Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sports in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, <http://www.vojvodina.gov.rs/en/provincial-secretariat-sports-and-youth>
- Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/>

Documents on Youth Policy

- Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the Period 2015-2017, <http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/Action%20plan%20for%20the%20implementation%20of%20the%20National%20Youth%20Strategy%202015-2017.pdf>
- Evaluation of the National Youth Strategy (2008-2014) in the Republic of Serbia and Action Plan (2009 – 2014), [http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/Evaluation of the National Youth Strategy eng.pdf](http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/Evaluation%20of%20the%20National%20Youth%20Strategy%20eng.pdf)
- The Law on Youth, <http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/The%20Law%20on%20Youth.pdf>
- National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, <http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/NSM%202015-2025%20ENGLISH%20..pdf>
- Research, Young People in Serbia 2015, Situation, Perceptions, Beliefs and Aspirations, <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/7110686/Young+People+in+Serbia+2015.pdf/1a8d5db9-8dc7-4f3a-bcb9-2af0610d0d94>