

Youth Partnership

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



CONTRIBUTION OF PARTNER COUNTRIES TO THE EU YOUTH WIKI CHAPTER V: ALBANIA PARTICIPATION

Author: Lutjona Lula

December 2023

Disclaimer: the opinions expressed in this work, commissioned by the European Union–Council of Europe Youth Partnership, are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of either of the partner institutions, their member states or the organisations co-operating with them.

Contents

5.1 General context	3
Main concepts	3
5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy	4
Young people as voters	4
Young people as political representatives	5
5.3 Youth representation bodies	6
Youth parliament	6
Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards	6
Higher education student union(s)	7
School student union(s)	8
Other bodies	8
5.4 Young people’s participation in policy making	8
Formal mechanisms of consultation	8
Bodies promoting youth participation	10
Information on the extent of youth participation	11
Outcomes	11
Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people	11
5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation	12
Existence of a national strategy to increase young people’s political and civil society participation	12
Scope and content	12
Authority responsible for the implementation of the strategy	12
Revisions/updates	12
5.6 Supporting youth organisations	13
Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations	13
Public financial support	13
Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants	14
5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning	14
Educators’ support	15
5.8 Raising political awareness among young people	16
5.9 e-participation	17
5.10 Current debates and reforms	17
Forthcoming policy developments	17
Ongoing debates	17
References	18

5.1 General context

Albania's democratic transition has made it easier for young people to get more involved in a variety of facets of civic life, which has resulted in a noteworthy development in youth participation in recent years. Notably, the growth of initiatives and groups run by young people has sparked transformation. These organisations address a wide range of societal problems, and their impact is seen in the numbers. Many youth organisations actively promote causes relating to education, the environment and social justice in Albania. The youth sector played a significant role in the 2021 establishment of the [National Youth Council of Albania](#).

Despite great progress, there are still enormous obstacles to overcome. [Albania has a 22.5% youth unemployment rate](#), and the education system still has issues giving young people access to opportunities for quality education and vocational training. [The Law on Youth in Albania \(2019\)](#), which highlights the value of young participation in decision-making processes, is one example of a legal framework and regulation that has been created to facilitate youth participation. However, there is still work to be done in terms of how these rules and regulations will be put into practice and how they will affect how young people are empowered. Between urban and rural communities, where access to resources and opportunity might differ greatly, there are disparities in youth engagement as well. It is critical for the government and civil society to promote more inclusive and representative youth involvement in Albania.

Main concepts

This section provides a general overview of the institutional and regulatory framework of the representative democracy in Albania. Albania's democracy has been fluctuating between transitional democracy and hybrid regimes for several years. According to the Freedom House Report "[Nations in Transit 2023](#)", Albania scores 46/100 points, thus ranking as a transitional or hybrid regime. Similarly, Albania exhibits mid-range performance across all categories of democracy in the [Global State of Democracy Indices](#). Overall participation of Albanian citizens in political and socio-economic life scores 0.56 out of a maximum of one.

Albania is a representative democracy with numerous essential institutions that serve as the foundation of its democratic system. Albania's primary institutions of representative democracy are as follows.

- [Parliament \(Kuvendi i Shqipërisë\)](#): the unicameral Albanian Parliament is the supreme legislative body responsible for passing laws and representing the interests of the people.
- [President \(Presidenti i Republikës\)](#): the President of Albania is the ceremonial head of state and plays a crucial role in the appointment of key officials and the execution of laws.

- **Government (Qeveria e Shqipërisë)**: the government, headed by the prime minister, is responsible for implementing policies and running the day-to-day affairs of the country.
- **Prime Minister's Office (Kryeministri)**: the prime minister is the head of government and is typically the leader of the political party or coalition with the majority in parliament.
- **Political parties**: various political parties and coalitions represent different ideologies and compete in elections to form the government or opposition.
- **Judiciary (Gjyqësori)**: the Albanian judiciary is an independent branch responsible for interpreting and upholding the law, ensuring the rule of law and protecting the rights of citizens.
- **Constitutional Court (Gjykata Kushtetuese)**: the Constitutional Court is responsible for reviewing the constitutionality of laws and government actions.
- **Central Election Committee (Komisioni Qendror i Zgjedhjeve)**: this independent body manages and oversees national and local elections to ensure fairness and transparency in the electoral process.
- **Ombudsman (Avokati i Popullit)**: the ombudsman serves as a representative of the citizens, addressing complaints and concerns related to government actions and ensuring the protection of human rights.
- **Local government**: Albania has a system of local government, with municipalities and communes responsible for managing local affairs, services and development.
- **Media and civil society**: independent media outlets and civil society organisations play a significant role in promoting transparency, accountability and civic engagement.

These institutions collectively work to uphold the principles of democracy, ensure the rule of law, protect individual rights and facilitate representative governance in Albania.

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

Young people as voters

Article 3, paragraph 3, of the [updated Electoral Code](#) in Albania, as of 2020, states that “Every Albanian citizen who has reached the age of 18, even on election day, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, language, political belief, faith, physical ability or economic status, has the right to vote and be elected, in accordance with the rules provided in this Code”.

The last central government elections in Albania took place in April 2021. The overall turnout, according to statistics provided by the [Central Election Committee \(CEC\)](#), was 46.33%. However, the CEC does not provide data about youth turnout. Data are disaggregated for women voters. However, it offers data on first-time voters, which refers to the category of citizens turning 18

years old, including on election day. On 25 April 2021, there were 107 024 first-time voters registered, compared to the overall number of 3 588 869 voters, comprising thus 3% of total number of voters (CEC 2021).

As for the latest local elections held in Albania in May 2023, the turnout was 38.23%, marking the lowest turnout result, excluding the 2019 elections which were boycotted by the opposition parties ([Open Data, 2023](#)). As for first-time voters, the turnout was even lower at just 13.5%, signifying a problem with engaging Albanian youth (Euronews 2023).

According to the National Survey on Politics and Young People 2019, two thirds of young people surveyed by Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) in Albania claim that they are not satisfied at all with the current political situation in the country. Similarly, they have low trust in the democratic institutions of the country with around half of them (49%) not trusting the parliament as a law-making body and only 2% saying that they have full trust in the role of the parliament in the country. Young people have similarly low levels of trust in political parties, with 53% of them saying they do not trust them at all and another 28% only having a little trust in them (Westminster Foundation for Democracy 2019).

Several initiatives and campaigns have been undertaken to educate and raise awareness among young voters on the importance of participation in elections. According to the [OSCE Presence in Albania](#) and the CEC, a series of activities were organised targeted at young voters to boost their participation in elections on the occasion of Global Elections Day, on 4 February 2021. The OSCE and the CEC invited young people from across the country to create videos and slogans for the 25 April general elections and awarded four winners at an event hosted by State Commissioner for Elections, Ilirjan Celibashi, and Vincenzo Del Monaco, Head of the OSCE Presence. Nevertheless, youth turnout remains low overall.

[Young people as political representatives](#)

According to Article 3 of the [Electoral Code in Albania](#), individuals have the right to be elected from the age of 18. Generally in Albania, there are low levels of participation in political activity among young people. The biggest entry point into political life remains the youth forums of the political parties. Besides the electoral code, the Law on Youth 75/2019 also encourages young people to engage in social political life, but there are not specific articles on political representation.

According to data from the CEC, since April 2021 the percentage of members of parliament younger than 35 years old has only been 7.14%. The age group most represented in parliament is

from 51 to 60 years old. The youngest member of parliament in Albania is Andia Ulliri, who was 22 when she was elected.

Currently, the three biggest youth wings of political parties are the Youth Forum of the Socialist Party (FRESSH), the Youth Forum of the Democratic Party (FRD) and the Youth Forum of the Freedom Party, formerly the Socialist Movement for Integration. Smaller parties also have their youth wings, such as the Youth Greens of Albania. The youth wings of three major political parties in Albania have their own statutes and are registered as political organisations affiliated with the respective parties. [Westminster Foundation for Democracy](#) has been working with political parties in Albania and their youth forums and through their programmatic work they aim to enable young people to claim more space within political parties.

5.3 Youth representation bodies

Youth parliament

There is currently no youth parliament in Albania. Several attempts have been made to establish one, mainly by the youth sector and supported by the international aid and international development donor community. Nevertheless, youth representative structures lack wider recognition and legal recognition beyond the status of NGOs or informal groups, and they struggle with financial sustainability. Some initiatives worth mentioning include:

- [National Youth Congress](#), an umbrella organisation of several youth NGOs and co-host of the Tirana European Youth Capital Award 2022
- [European Youth Parliament Albania](#), an NGO promoting participation
- [Albanian Youth Parliament](#), a local initiative by CRCA Albania
- Albanian National Youth Network (ANYN). In co-operation with other organisations, ANYN advocates the identification of problems and concerns that young people face and the solutions proposed by them, and that the electoral programmes of the political parties focus on the real problems of young people
- [Albanian Rural Youth Parliament](#), an initiative of the Albanian Rural Development Network, fostering the participation of young people in Albania.

Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

The National Youth Law, approved in 2019, defines a “young person” as an individual, female or male, between the age of 15 and 29. This law provides the legal basis for drafting strategic policies and programmes for young people.

The National Youth Council (Këshilli Rinor Kombëtar) in Albania is an advisory body that operates under the minister responsible for youth. It is composed of young people, representatives of youth-focused organisations and representatives from central and local institutions, including the [National Youth Agency](#) (Agjencia Kombëtare e Rinisë AKR), with the aim of consulting on youth policies and strategies.

[Decision No. 969, dated 2 December 2020 of the Council of Ministers](#), “On determining the criteria and procedures for the selection of members of the National Youth Council, as well as its organisation and operation”, states that the NYC consists of 16 members, of which at least five must be selected respecting the gender quotas defined in point 2. The composition and structure of the NYC is stipulated to be as follows:

- one member being the State Minister for Youth and Children, who holds the position of chairperson;
- one member being the head of the National Youth Agency;
- two representatives from the Agency for the Support of Local Self-Government;
- eight representatives from the youth sector and/or youth organisations;
- four representative members of student councils.

The mandate of National Youth Council members is two years. Candidates are elected through an online voting system.

Law 75/2019 stipulates the creation of local youth councils as well. The Local Youth Council serves as a liaison mechanism between the municipality and the youth community, to identify the problems and challenges faced by young people in the territory where they live, and also to increase their involvement in policy making. Local Youth Councils (Këshillat Vendor Rinor) are also important structures. They serve as a bridge between the municipality and young people, highlighting the problems and challenges faced by young people in the area where they live. The number of municipalities that have established Local Youth Councils is currently low.

[Higher education student union\(s\)](#)

Higher education institutions in Albania have academic freedom, as well as financial and organisational autonomy, as per Article 3, paragraph 1, of [Law No. 80/2015](#). To this end, every university in Albania has the autonomy to organise internal structures based on the statute of regulations adopted. Student government is a good practice applied in all universities, including public and private ones. Other student organisations include professional networks and NGOs, such as the AIESEC, ESN Albania, Albanian Medical Students Association and ELSA, which operate independently from student senates and cross-universities.

School student union(s)

In Albania, all citizens have the right to education, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity, guaranteed by the Constitution of Albania. [Law No. 69/2012](#) on “Pre-University Education of the Republic of Albania” specifies the structure of the educational system. Nevertheless, pupils’ governments are not provided for by law, despite being a best practice in schools. Pupils elect their representatives to a pupils’ government, which then elects the school president.

Albania has embarked on significant education reforms, such as the decentralisation of school governance and the introduction of a competence-based curriculum. This has contributed to improvement across key education indicators, [as shown in an OECD report](#).

Other bodies

International organisations in Albania have established their youth advisory boards. The [UN Youth Advisory Group in Albania](#) consists of individuals and representatives of UN Albania’s stakeholders who have been nominated/selected to advise the UN in Albania Country Team (UNCT) on key youth issues. The group’s first project was to assist in developing the “youth” component of the UN Common Country Analysis for Albania (CCA) and it advised on shaping youth interventions under the new Albania–UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026. They also assist in strengthening the partnership of UN Albania with youth organisations and young people.

[OSCE Presence in Albania Youth Advisory Group](#). Since 2018, the OSCE Presence in Albania has relied on its Youth Advisory Group, consisting of active young Albanians, to further its efforts to integrate a youth perspective and youth-specific considerations, concerns, needs and priorities into its planning and programmatic activities. They also raise awareness and boost communities’ responses against radicalisation and violent extremism.

For more information, please see sections 5.3.

5.4 Young people’s participation in policy making

Formal mechanisms of consultation

In Albania, formal mechanisms of consultation are not explicitly tailored to young people. However, young people can be engaged in consultations through several mechanisms. Public consultation mechanisms in Albania are a formal process for citizens and other stakeholders to give their views at key stages of the policy process.

First and foremost, the main formal mechanism for consultation is [Law No. 119/2014](#) on “Right to Information”. The law requires public authorities to adopt and implement a transparency programme, which specifies the categories and methods of making public information available without request (Article 4). The law also lists the categories of information that must be made public without request, such as the organisational structure, functions and duties of the public authority, the legal acts, the budget and expenditures, the procurement procedures, the services provided to the public, etc. (Article 7).

Currently, the most prominent platform for consultations and participation, including e-participation, is the “Public Consultation” platform <https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/>. It has been promoted by the Prime Minister’s Office especially for current ongoing policy debates in Albania, such as the legalisation of cannabis sativa, taxation, etc. The National Youth Strategy 2022-2029 was put out to consultation using this platform, aiming to reach as many young people as possible (<https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/Konsultime/Detaje/500>).

The New National Youth Strategy 2022-2029 is the main regulatory framework document, following Law No. 75/2019 that regulates the youth sector and young people in terms of participation. It clearly states as an important principle the promotion of meaningful participation of young people for the next seven policy years. Young people and the youth sector have been consulted on the strategy through two main pillars of work. Following the public report issued by the State Minister for Youth and Children on the consultation process, the following numbers were achieved.

There were two consultation methods used for the draft National Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2022-29 document.

1. Consultations with the target actors and interest groups for the definition and assessment of needs, goals, priorities and proposals during the drafting of documents that included:

- physical meetings for consultation with young people in 22 municipalities of the country between September 2021 and January 2022. About 1 200 young people from 68 high schools participated in these meetings;
- consultation with 61 youth workers for all municipalities during the winter school organised by the National Youth Agency in November 2021;
- consultative meeting with members of the National Youth Council on 2 February 2022 at the Prime Minister’s Office;
- online consultation meetings with the members of the Interinstitutional Working Group for the drafting of the National Youth Strategy 2022-29 and the action plan on 1 February 2022 and 9 March 2022;

- physical and online consultative meetings with representatives of development partners and 45 non-profit youth and youth organisations during the period December 2021 to March 2022;
- a special meeting for consultation on the draft strategy held in the Children’s Village in Korçë, 19-20 March 2022, and attended by about 200 young high school students from all over Albania.

2. Consultations with the target actors and interest groups after the finalisation of the draft documents that included:

- consultative meeting on the draft strategy and action plan with young members of the local youth councils of the 31 local units, in Divjakë, Lushnje, 12-14 August 2022;
- consultative meeting on the draft strategy with the National Youth Council, at the Prime Minister’s Office on 22 August 2022;
- consultative meeting on the draft strategy with the Consultative Council of Local and Central Governments 20 September 2022 and its approval in principle by the council through Decision No. 5, dated 29 September 2022;
- electronic consultations, announced through the Electronic Register RENJIK, from 11 August 2022 to 8 September 2022: <https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/Konsultime/Detaje/500>.

Another mechanism of consultation is the website “Local Consultation”, where Albanian citizens can express their views on local issues: <https://konsultimivendor.al/>.

Specifically on youth matters, the State Minister for Youth and Children implements as stipulated by law the programme of public transparency: <https://rinia.gov.al/programi-i-transparences/>.

Bodies promoting youth participation

The main institutions that promote youth participation in Albania are as follows.

- **Ministry of Youth and Children:** this ministry is a lead actor in promoting youth participation.
- **Ministry of Finance and Economy:** this ministry also plays a significant role, especially in terms of education programmes.
- **National Agency for Employment and Skills:** This agency promotes youth participation in economic initiatives.
- **Municipalities:** local government bodies are significant promoters of youth participation at local level. Young people as rightful citizens can engage in local council meetings, local

hearings and in the participatory budgeting process, which is mandatory in Albania, thus allowing young people to influence the financial agenda locally.

- **National Youth Council**
- **Youth sector**
- **International Donor community**

These parties work together to create an environment that encourages youth participation in various aspects of society.

Information on the extent of youth participation

According to the [Youth Participation Index](#), a tool developed by Partners Albania for Change and Development, Albania scored 63.4% in 2021. The Youth Participation Index is based on indicators of economic, social and political participation.

- **Political dimension** refers to the opportunities young people have to become involved in political processes and to be informed about the work of the government, parliament and municipalities.
- **Economic dimension** refers to the degree to which young people are included in, or excluded from, the labour market. It captures the degree of their activity, employment and self-employment.
- **Social dimension** refers to young people's active engagement in community life. It is measured through factors such as formal and non-formal education and the absence of markers of social exclusion like poverty, reliance on welfare or time spent in prison or correctional facilities.

Outcomes

The participation of young people is becoming more visible and more discussed publicly; nevertheless, more is needed in terms of concrete actions, trust building and synergy among the main stakeholders in the youth sector.

Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people

There are currently no major developments.

5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation

Law No. 75/2019 and the National Youth Strategy 2022-2029 remain the main legal documents that promote an increase in youth participation. Contrary to other countries in Eastern Europe, such as Kosovo*, there is no dedicated strategy that promotes youth participation per se.

Nevertheless, Law No. 75.2019 defines and recognises the mechanism of “structured dialogue” as a tool for youth participation.

On the other hand, the National Youth Strategy 2022-2029 in its vision statement states as a priority the meaningful participation of young people in local and national decision making, in youth organisations and in community life.

Scope and content

The strategy has three main policy objectives, each with several specific objectives. Policy objective number one is focused on youth participation and states that: “young women and men actively participate in society and feel empowered to express themselves with their voice. Intersectoral youth policies are co-ordinated, based on analysis, with well-funded mechanisms”.

The specific objectives of policy objective number one are:

1. young people are well-informed about opportunities to learn, to gain organisational and volunteering experience and to participate actively in civic, social and political life;
2. youth policy is co-ordinated, based on analysis and harmonised in different sectors, and seeks cohesion and the optimisation of resources and the strengthening of the National Youth Agency as an implementing instrument of these policies;
3. the development of youth studies and youth data is encouraged as part of study programmes in higher education institutions and a useful resources for the development of the youth sector.

Authority responsible for the implementation of the strategy

The State Minister for Youth and Children and the National Youth Agency are the main authorities for the implementation of policy objective number one focusing on participation.

Revisions/updates

A concrete action plan is expected to be drafted and implemented in IPSIS, the Integrated Planning System for Albania.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations

The legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations in Albania is mainly based on the following.

- [The Law on Youth \(2019\)](#), which provides the legal basis for youth organisations, youth participation, youth councils and youth centres. It also defines the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, the National Youth Agency and other public authorities in relation to youth policies.
- [The National Youth Strategy Action Plan \(2022-2029\)](#), which is a strategic document that outlines the main objectives, priorities and measures for implementing youth policies in Albania. It covers six areas: education and training; employment and entrepreneurship; health and well-being; social inclusion and participation; culture and creativity; and volunteering.
- [The Law on Non-Profit Organisations 80/2021](#) which regulates the establishment, registration, functioning and dissolution of non-profit organisations in Albania, including youth organisations. It also defines the rights and obligations of non-profit organisations, as well as their relations with public authorities and donors.
- [The Law on Voluntarism 45/2016](#), which recognises the social value of voluntary work and establishes the legal framework for promoting and supporting voluntarism in Albania. It defines the principles, forms, conditions and benefits of voluntary work, as well as the rights and duties of volunteers and host organisations.

Public financial support

In Albania, there are several public financial support mechanisms for youth organisations.

- [National Youth Agency \(NAY\)](#): the NAY is responsible for the management of youth grant funds.
- [Ministry of State for Youth and Children](#): this ministry works with several international donors to adopt and improve the regulatory framework regarding public financing of civil society organisations.
- [Ministry of Culture](#): the Ministry of Culture in Albania provides funding for various youth programmes and initiatives.
- [Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance \(IPA\)](#): this EU funding instrument provides financial assistance to Albania, including support for democracy and governance, education, employment and social policies and regional and territorial co-operation.
- [Erasmus+](#): the national Erasmus+ office in Albania provides information about Erasmus+ activities that are open to the participation of their countries (including in the fields of

higher education, youth and VET, where relevant), advising and assisting potential applicants.

- **Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)**: the RYCO is an independently functioning institutional mechanism that aims to promote the spirit of reconciliation and co-operation between young people in the region through youth exchange programmes. The RYCO has supported projects in Albania as an intergovernmental regional organisation, funded by the six governments of the region.
- **Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)**: the RCC implemented the Western Balkans Youth Lab Project, which aims to provide opportunities for young people to participate in decision making. The project covers six Western Balkans economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) in which young people constitute 21.27% of the overall population.

These mechanisms aim to provide financial support to youth organisations in Albania to help them carry out their activities and contribute to youth development.

Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

Inclusion and diversity are being mainstreamed across youth policy in Albania mainly with the help of international donors and development communities. The youth sector is also playing a pivotal role in challenging old mindsets and structures in this regard.

5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning

In Albania, both formal and non-formal learning play a crucial role in promoting participation and civic education.

Formal learning as per the OECD assessment

The Albanian education system has made significant progress in developing a multiparty democracy and open market economy. The country has embarked on significant education reforms such as the decentralisation of school governance and the introduction of a competence-based curriculum. Access to compulsory education has expanded in recent years, and student performance in international surveys has trended upwards over several cycles. However, a large share of Albanian students continue to leave school without mastering basic competences.

Non-formal learning

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Albania is in the process of developing a national system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning with a focus on VET, [supported by the UNDP](#). Implementing the validation system is a priority and according to the [National Employment and Skills Strategy \(NESS\) 2023-2030](#), it is expected to be operational by the first quarter of 2026. Non-formal education is realised within separate courses (for example typists, cosmetologists, dressmakers, etc.) and schools for learning foreign languages ([EURYDICE](#)). These come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science if the courses last more than six months. Otherwise, they come under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth.

Civic education

Civic education is an integral part of the curriculum in Albanian schools. It aims to equip students with knowledge about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, as well as skills for active participation in democratic processes. The legal framework in Albania provides the right to education for all children, regardless of their needs and special abilities. On the other hand, the youth sector has promoted and mainstreamed civic education through non-formal education and donor-funded projects. These efforts aim to foster an environment that encourages active participation in society and promotes lifelong learning among Albanian citizens.

[Educators' support](#)

Educators' support in Albania has taken on significant importance recently. While the non-formal sector is still advocating recognition, formal educators at all levels are supported by the Ministry of Education, with training programmes up to the level of university education. Then, each higher education institution has its own level of autonomy and regulations for staff upskilling and support.

Albania is considered a developing country and as such many international development organisations offer their support in different sectors, including education. The Albanian-American Development Fund (AAD), is implementing the [Center for School Leadership project](#), in co-operation with the Government of Albania, offering training and support mainly for school directors.

The [Center for School Leadership](#) (CSL) was established as result of co-operation between the Albanian-American Development Foundation (AADF) and the [Ministry of Education, and Sport](#) and aims to support the professional development of incumbent and aspiring head teachers and deputy head teachers from public or private pre-university educational institutions, by administering compulsory training and the certification process and providing continuous on-the-job professional development training.

The CSL relies on a well-defined legal framework such as the [Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 540/2018 dated 19 September 2018](#) “On the organisation and operation of the Center for School Leadership – and their training and certification”.

5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

The [Westminster Foundation for Democracy \(WFD\) in Albania](#): the WFD is working to help improve political party accessibility by working with their youth wings and by generating research and evidence for improving the political and national discourse. WFD Albania also works with civil society organisations (CSOs) to strengthen their advocacy capacities, facilitate networking and exchange among them, and help them to better interact with different layers of governance. In April 2021, they helped monitor parliamentary elections by focusing on the inclusion of women, young people and people with disabilities.

The [Central Election Commission \(CEC\) of Albania](#): the CEC has launched its Strategic Activity Plan 2022-2026. This is the first strategic plan from the institution, outlining a detailed set of goals, concrete activities and indicators to be carried out on a mid-term basis. Some of the priority areas it tackles involve out-of-country voting, the digitalisation of key election administration processes and strengthening internal and external training and education capacities.

The [Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung \(FES\) Tirana](#) and [Konrad Adenauer Stiftung \(KAS\)](#) are among some leading organisations that have been actively working in Albania to raise political awareness among young people. These foundations support local youth organisations with projects targeting young people. They also support youth forums of political parties, aligning with their political orientation, respectively FES supporting the centre-left youth forum of Socialist Party of Albania called FRESSH; while KAS works with the centre-right youth forum of Democratic party of Albania called FRD.

The [National Democratic Institute \(NDI\)](#): the NDI has worked in Albania for more than two decades, promoting political party development, supporting democratic elections, increasing the transparency of political finance and assisting with citizen political participation – particularly among women and young people. The NDI has helped politicians, civic activists and the general public to engage in election monitoring, legislative advocacy and issue-based organising at the local level. The NDI has supported women’s civil society organisations to successfully advocate the strengthening of a gender election quota; helped improve the involvement of young politicians in instituting policy development practices inside political parties; and helped citizens’ election organisations to increase transparency of the electoral process. The NDI also assists the Albanian Parliament, including through supporting the development of parliamentary services

and staff to provide independent, balanced and professional research and analysis to facilitate informed legislative decision making.

5.9 e-participation

Please refer to section 5.4, “Formal mechanisms of consultation”.

5.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Albania has recently adopted the [National Youth Strategy 2022-2029](#) and in terms of regulatory frameworks no further major developments have been taking place. Nevertheless, the focus is now on implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

Youth participation in Albania remains an important topic for further development, therefore the youth sector, supported by several donors, is working to enhance participation with different projects. Nevertheless, a co-ordinated effort is needed to create synergy and avoid fragmentation and duplication, so that all actions can lead to a common goal of enhanced meaningful youth participation.

Ongoing debates

Currently in Albania, digitalisation is an overarching priority; therefore, most of the ongoing debates in the youth sector and in policy making are linked to e-participation, cybersecurity and youth engagement. However, young people still have low trust in institutions and the economic challenges they face remain hot points for further policy intervention.

Most of the issues described in this chapter require further policy development in Albania, given that topics such as meaningful participation and e-participation remain unexplored and unregulated by policy makers with concrete actions. On the other hand, more awareness, information and capacity building is needed within the youth sector and for young people on the importance of engagement and participation, bodies and existing procedures that enable their participation, as well as how young people can be themselves more proactive in these regard.

References

Central Election Committee <https://kqz.gov.al/results/results2021/results2021.htm>

Children Rights Center Albania <https://wwwwww.crca.al/en/fushata/voto-per-16/>

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://wwwwww.ips.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/IPSIS-sq.pdf

Electoral Code of Albania <https://qbz.gov.al/preview/75122d2e-9ebc-45de-b0ea-b5efde2f6836>

Euronews Albania, 2023 <https://euronews.al/en/young-people-do-not-know-how-to-vote-in-the-local-elections/>

Euronews Albania, 2023 <https://euronews.al/en/lower-turnout-of-youth-in-the-may-14-elections/>

Euronews Albania, 2023 <https://euronews.al/en/unemployment-rates-in-albania-on-the-rise-particularly-among-youth/>

Eurospeak, <https://wwwwww.eurospeak.al/news/dritare-per-te-rinjte/terinjte-mireqeverisje-demokraci/>

Global State of Democracy Initiative <https://wwwwww.idea.int/democracytracker/country/albania>

Law 75/2019 <https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Permbledhje-e-ligjit-dhe-akteve-n%C3%ABnligjore-n%C3%AB-fush%C3%ABn-e-rinis%C3%AB.pdf>

Maldirini Initiative of RYO, <https://mladirini.org/alb/canvas/blog-alb/te-rinjte-ne-shqiperi/>

National Youth Strategy and Action Plan <https://riniafemijet.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Strategjia-Kombetare-e-Rinise-2022-2029-1.pdf>

Nations in Transit Report, 2023, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/albania/nations-transit/2023>

Partners Albania for Change and Development, 2018, Youth Political Participation https://partnersalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Youth_Political_Participation_Albania_2018.pdf

Peci, D. & Nikolli, Xh., Overview of Youth Policies, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/albanien/14341.pdf>

Peci, D. & Xhemollari, R. Youth Participation in Local Elections, <https://portavendore.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Studimi-mbi-zgjedhjet-2019.pdf>

UNICEF Albania <https://www.unicef.org/albania/reports/facing-challenges-inclusive-education-albania>

Western Balkans Democracy Initiative, 2022, National Survey: Young People and Politics in Albania https://www.wfd.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/national-survey_young-people-and-politics-in-albania-final.pdf

Youth Participation Index <https://youthwbt.eu/youth-participation-index-2021/> \

Youth Platform <http://platformarinore.org/burime/>