

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: KOSOVO^{*1} PARTICIPATION

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¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

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5.1 General context

Kosovo, situated in the heart of South-East Europe, is the most recent addition to the countries of Europe. As of 2021, according to the [Kosovo Agency of Statistics](#), the population of Kosovo was 1 773 971. Young people in Kosovo constitute a significant proportion of the general population, which is a notable demographic characteristic of the country. According to [Census 2011](#) data, in Kosovo, around 18.2% of the total population belong to the age group 15-24 years old. Currently, based on Article 3, paragraph 1.1, of [Law No. 03/L-145 on Empowerment and Participation of Youth](#), the age group of youth in Kosovo is defined as being between 15 and 24 years old, which takes the United Nations definition of youth as its basis. Compared to both neighbouring countries in the region and European Union member states as a whole, the upper age limit for this demographic group is relatively lower, typically capped at 29 or 30 years. This demographic feature emphasises the significance of involving young people in various facets of society.

In this context, [Law No. 03/L-145](#), known as the Empowerment and Participation of Youth (LEPY) Law, serves as the authoritative document with the primary objective of advocating and reinforcing the ongoing involvement of young individuals in the decision-making processes. This law is committed to fostering inclusivity and equality, thus playing a pivotal role in the advancement of a democratic society. Its overarching aim is to enhance the overall quality of life and social standing of the youth population. The LEPY consists of a comprehensive set of 19 articles, primarily geared towards bolstering youth participation in decision-making procedures, and it assigns specific responsibilities to both central and local institutions to ensure that youth are actively engaged in public life. On the Public Consultation Portal, the [draft law on youth](#) has gone under the consultation process and is in the finalisation phase. The proposed youth law seeks to establish comprehensive regulations for the youth sector, spanning intergovernmental and intersectoral domains. It positions youth as a focal point within the nation's priorities, with the overarching goal of advancing their active participation in decision-making processes. The law aims to ensure equitable and all-encompassing involvement, ultimately enhancing the quality of life and social standing of young people. Notably, the draft law introduces several innovative elements. Article 3 of the draft defines a "young person" as an individual aged between 15 and 29 years old, a positive change that aligns with European Union standards in this regard. With a total of 27 articles, the implementation of the youth law is anticipated to bring about substantial improvements in the status and well-being of youth in Kosovo.

5.1.1 Main concepts

The engagement of young individuals in political life and broader public affairs plays a vital role in fostering a robust democracy. Participation, both in Kosovo and many other nations, revolves

around the active inclusion of individuals, communities and stakeholders in decision-making processes and initiatives that have an impact on their lives and the overall welfare of society. Within the Kosovo framework, participation encompasses a wide spectrum of dimensions and levels, spanning political, civic, social and economic aspects. This multifaceted approach to participation is fundamental to ensuring a vibrant and inclusive democratic system.

The fundamental concept of youth participation is the active involvement of young people in decision-making processes at various levels of society, including politics, education and community development. The political participation of young people refers to their participation in decision-making and policy-making processes in order to contribute to the construction of values, norms and practices of a society.² Article 13, paragraphs 1 and 2, of Law No. 03/L-145 on Empowerment and Participation of Youth (LEPY), is the sole provision explicitly addressing youth participation in decision making. However, it lacks a clear definition of what constitutes “youth participation”, leading to ambiguity in policy contexts. Furthermore, this article confines the realms of participation to specific areas, including education, employment, public health, social issues, culture and sports, citizenship and democracy, and environment, spatial planning and rural development. This limited scope potentially overlooks other domains where youth engagement could be equally significant.

Conversely, the [Strategy for Youth 2019-2023](#) serves as the central document for guiding the execution of youth policy in Kosovo. Its primary objectives encompass enhancing youth involvement in decision-making processes and public life, as well as promoting participation in informal education, employability initiatives, education, health promotion, culture, sports and recreational activities. This strategy outlines a comprehensive framework for addressing various facets of youth engagement and development in Kosovo.

5.1.2 Institutions of representative democracy

Kosovo officially proclaimed its independence from Serbia on 17 February 2008. In its declaration of independence, Kosovo made several key commitments, including adhering to the Ahtisaari Plan’s obligations, embracing multi-ethnicity as a core principle of effective governance and welcoming a period of international oversight. Kosovo’s constitutional framework outlines its governance structure and the allocation of powers among its institutions. The primary document defining this framework is the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, which was ratified on 15 June 2008, shortly after Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia. Based on the [Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo](#) (2008), the state and its constitutional bodies have authority over security, justice and law enforcement, but are obliged

² <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/223741253/New+forms+of+youth+political+participation+May+2023+final.pdf/f5f645a3-87d0-068c-a64f-7e16d304ac53?t=1684313970716>.

to co-operate with international authorities and to act in accordance with Kosovo's international responsibilities. Kosovo is a parliamentary republic recognised by more than 100 UN members and 23 out of 28 members of the EU.³

In addition, Kosovo's political system is based on the principles of a parliamentary democracy. The politics of Kosovo takes place in a framework of a multiparty parliamentary representative democratic republic, whereby the president is the head of state and the prime minister the head of government. There follows an overview of the constitutional structure of Kosovo.

The [Assembly of Kosovo](#) is the primary legislative institution and is directly elected for a four-year mandate. The unicameral Assembly contains 120 seats and members are elected for four-year terms; 100 are directly elected by proportional representation, while 10 seats are reserved for ethnic Serbs and another 10 are reserved for other ethnic communities. The constitution defines Kosovo as a secular state.⁴ Kosovo is a parliamentary republic, with the prime minister indirectly elected for a four-year term by a simple majority (61 votes) of the 120-member Assembly). Kosovo has held elections regularly at both central and municipal levels. The system is based on a competition of political parties and voters can choose freely between them.⁵

The president is elected by the Assembly, the unicameral legislative body. The president serves as the head of state and is chosen by a two-thirds majority vote of all deputies in the Assembly. The president's term in office lasts for five years. While the president does have ceremonial duties, such as representing Kosovo on the international stage, they also possess certain constitutional powers. One of the significant powers of the president is the appointment of the prime minister, who serves as the head of government and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the country. This balance of powers between the president and the prime minister is a crucial aspect of Kosovo's political system. On the other hand, the prime minister is the head of government and is typically the leader of the political party or coalition that holds the majority of seats in the Kosovo Assembly. The prime minister leads the executive branch and is responsible for implementing government policies. The Cabinet, also known as the Council of Ministers, consists of ministers responsible for various government ministries and departments. It is responsible for proposing and implementing government policies and decisions.

The components of Kosovo's governance and civil society infrastructure, as outlined below, play a pivotal role in ensuring the effective functioning of its democratic system and the safeguarding of human rights and the rule of law. These components work together to promote

³ https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2022_RKS.pdf.

⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/kosovo/freedom-world/2023>.

⁵ <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/Kosovo%20Report%202022.pdf>.

transparency, accountability and the well-being of the population. They are essential for fostering a democratic and just society.

- **Judiciary:** Kosovo's judiciary is characterised by its independence and consists of various courts, with the Supreme Court serving as the highest judicial authority. The judicial system plays a critical role in upholding the rule of law, protecting the rights of citizens and ensuring justice is served.
- **Local governance:** Kosovo is divided into municipalities, each of which has its own municipal assembly and mayor. These local governance bodies are responsible for managing local services, infrastructure and addressing community-related issues, thereby promoting decentralisation and local autonomy.
- **Independent institutions:** the Republic of Kosovo has established a range of independent institutions, including the Constitutional Court, the Central Election Commission and the Office of the Ombudsperson. These institutions are designed to safeguard democratic principles, protect human rights and uphold the rule of law, contributing to the overall governance and accountability of the country.
- **Civil society organisations (CSOs):** civil society organisations, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), advocacy groups and think tanks, play a crucial role in Kosovo's political landscape. They serve as watchdogs, monitoring government actions, advocating specific issues and promoting public engagement in decision-making processes. CSOs are vital for fostering transparency, accountability and social change.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Kosovo achieved the status of a prospective EU member and entered into a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU in October 2015, which has been in effect since April 2016.

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

5.2.1 Young people as voters

In Kosovo, the youth demographic is viewed as a significant political force, constituting more than half of the population and representing a substantial portion of the electorate. This younger generation has shown growing engagement in various forms of political activism, CSOs and political parties. They have actively taken part in elections, both by casting their votes and by running as candidates. Political parties serve as a crucial channel for representative democracy in Kosovo, allowing these young individuals to voice their perspectives and

contribute to the political landscape. They can be considered the conventional spaces for young people to participate directly in decision-making and policy-making processes.⁶

Article 45 on “Electoral and participation rights” of the [Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo](#) states that:

1. Every citizen of the Republic of Kosovo who has reached the age of 18, even on the day of the elections, enjoys the right to vote and be elected, except when this right is limited by a court decision.
2. The vote is personal, equal, free and secret.
3. State institutions support the opportunities for everyone’s participation in public activities and the right of everyone to democratically influence the decisions of public bodies.

Article 2 of [Law No. 03/L-073 on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo](#) states that: “Every citizen of Kosovo has the right to vote and be elected without discrimination on the ground of race, ethnicity, colour, language, gender, religious belief or political convictions, education, social affiliation or any other similar criteria pursuant to the provisions of this law”. The voting age in Kosovo was set at 18 years old, which is consistent with the voting age in many democracies around the world. More precisely in Article 5, entitled “Voter Eligibility”, of the above-mentioned law, it is stated that:

A person is eligible to vote in an election in accordance with the present Law if he or she is at least eighteen (18) years of age on the day of the election and satisfies at least one of the following criteria:

- a) he or she is registered as a citizen of Kosovo in the Central Civil Registry;
- b) he or she is residing outside Kosovo and left Kosovo on or after 1 January 1998, provided that he or she meets the criteria in applicable legislation for being a citizen of Kosovo;
- c) he or she obtained the status of a refugee, as defined in the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951 and its Protocol of 16 December 1966, on or after 1 January 1995, and is eligible to be registered in the Central Civil Registry as a habitual resident of Kosovo.

The legal framework for elections has remained unchanged since 2010.⁷ There is no imminent plan to lower the voting age limit under the age of 18 in Kosovo. There is no special provision for young people in the electoral law and/or rules.

⁶ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/223741253/New+forms+of+youth+political+participation+May+2023+final.pdf/f5f645a3-87d0-068c-a64f-7e16d304ac53?t=1684313970716>, pp. 21-22.

In addition, the study “[Voter Turnout among Youth of Kosovo](#)” in 2016 revealed that the list of voters in Kosovo includes approximately 30 000 new voters every year. An overview about the age groups of participation in election in the last decade is given in the report entitled “[Electoral trends in Republic of Kosovo](#)” prepared by Central Election Commission. Tables 1 and 2 below reveal the participation trends according to age groups in elections at both levels (central and local) conducted during the period from 2009-2021:

Table 1: Participation in voting by age group in five election processes for the Assembly of Kosovo (2010; 2014; 2017; 2019 and 2021)				
Elections 2010	(18-21)		(22-25)	
Registered voters	147 228		157 217	
Voters who voted	77 326	52.52%	70 256	44.69%
Elections 2014	(18-21)		(22-25)	
Registered voters	139 636		169 522	
Voters who voted	70 429	50.44%	74 077	43.70%
Elections 2017	(18-21)		(22-25)	
Registered voters	136 773		170 525	
Voters who voted	65 193	47.67%	73 458	43.08%
Elections 2019	(18-21)		(22-25)	
Registered voters	159 260		167 529	
Voters who voted	78 965	49.58%	73 970	44.15%
Elections 2021	(18-21)		(22-25)	
Registered voters	126 487		154 591	
Voters who voted	67 036	53.00%	72 647	46.99%
Table 2: participation in voting by age group in four election processes for the Local elections in Kosovo (2009; 2013; 2017; and 2021)				
Elections 2009	(18-21)		(22-25)	
Registered voters	134 802		153 444	
Voters who voted	68 436	50.77%	63 811	41.59%
Elections 2013	(18-21)		(22-25)	
Registered voters	157 397		168 343	
Voters who voted	88 311	56.11%	80 733	47.96%
Elections 2017	(18-21)		(22-25)	
Registered voters	153 737		171 334	
Voters who voted	77 721	50.55%	78 081	45.57%

⁷ EC, Kosovo* 2022 Report, p. 8.

Elections 2021	(18-21)		(22-25)	
Registered voters	157 515		158 957	
Voters who voted	75 325	47.82%	65 959	41.49%

The 18-21 age group which comprises first-time voters in election processes, consistently demonstrates the highest percentage of voting participation. In the 2013 local elections, this age group achieved an impressive participation rate of 56.11%, with 88 311 out of 157 397 registered voters casting their ballots. Similarly, in the 2021 Assembly elections, this age group exhibited a high participation rate of 53%. On the other hand, the 22-25 age group has not reached a 50% participation rate in any of the nine electoral processes. The highest recorded participation from this age group occurred during the 2013 local elections, with a rate of approximately 48%.

In contrast, the lowest participation rate from this age group was observed during the 2021 Assembly Elections, with a rate of around 42%.⁸

In the 2021 general elections in Kosovo, there was a total of 1 794 862 voters, of which 281 078 belonged to the age group of 18-25 years old. The voter turnout among young people in the last election, when compared to the overall population, was approximately 15.66%.⁹

5.2.2 Young people as political representatives

In Kosovo, young people are considered a source of political force. They represent more than half of the population and make up a considerable part of the electorate. However, their inclusion in decision-making and policy-planning processes remains very limited. Politics continues to be considered as an exclusive domain for strong and experienced men to wield power. Youth's contribution is confined to electoral campaigns and rallies¹⁰. Young people can become members of a political party from the age of 18 years old.¹¹

By all political parties in Kosovo, only the Movement for Self-determination (Lëvizja Vetëvendosje) has no forums for youth or women, reasoning that all members are equal and all are assessed on the basis of contributions within the movement. Forums are conceived as

⁸https://kqz-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/TRENDET-ZGJEDHORE-NE-REPUBLIKEN-E-KOSOVES--2009-2021_al-_post.pdf p. 38.

⁹ The data were processed by the author.

¹⁰ <https://balkansgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Youth-in-politics-web.pdf>. pg.2

¹¹ <https://kqz-ks.org/sherbime-per-subjektet-politike/regjistrimi-i-subjekteve-politike/>.

structures that will ease inclusion of youth and women into the decision-making process.¹² Other political parties that operate in Kosovo have established in the statute the creation of a youth forum. Young people from the age of 16 to 30 can be involved in such structures. Youth forums are organised at sub-branch, branch and central level.¹³ Nevertheless, there is no uniformity about the age issue in the youth forums of the political parties, as a determining criterion for “youth” membership into their structures.¹⁴ There is no quota of seats reserved for young people and there exist no special provisions to facilitate young people to stand as political candidate.

Based on the research conducted by D4D “For the parliamentary elections of 2019, only 17% of candidates of age up to 34 were presented in the lists of political parties.” In the Assembly of Kosovo, only three members of the parliament out of 120 members are under age 25”.¹⁵

5.3 Youth representation bodies

5.3.1 Youth parliament

In Kosovo, youth participation is governed by mechanisms at both the central and local levels. At the local level, participation is facilitated through Local Youth Action Councils (LYACs) and Youth Assemblies, which are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) dedicated to youth engagement. At the central level, youth participation is ensured through the Central Youth Action Council (CYAC) and Kosovo Youth Council, along with the Kosovo Youth Assembly, which function as national NGOs. These central-level organisations play a crucial role in advocating youth interests and fostering their involvement in broader national issues and policies. There is currently no youth parliament in Kosovo.

5.3.2 Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

The legal framework for the above instruments is the [Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth](#) (No. 03/L-145; LEPY). This said, youth engagement and participation are facilitated through the functioning of various mechanisms and institutions, including the following.

1. **The Central Youth Action Council (CYAC)** was established in 2011 and represents the interests of youth organisations at the central government level. Formation of the CYAC

¹² <https://balkansgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Youth-in-politics-web.pdf>.

¹³The author has referred to the statuses of various political parties, for instance <https://lidhjademokratike.org/statuti/>.

¹⁴<https://balkansgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Youth-in-politics-web.pdf>, p. 4.

¹⁵ https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/D4D_Youth-Manual_2020-1.pdf.

is foreseen under Articles 8 and 9 of Law No. 03/L-145. The CYAC is a voluntary organisation with a specific role towards central governance and international youth mechanisms. The CYAC is an advisory formation for youth issues, which represents the interests of youth organisations to central government institutions and international youth mechanisms. Around 130 youth organisations are represented on the council through their LYACs.¹⁶ In accordance with [Administrative Instruction 09/2010 for the Responsibilities and Procedures](#) of the Establishment and Functioning of the Youth Action Council (CYAC) in Kosovo, municipalities are obliged to develop the local youth action plans for the participation of youth in decision making. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is responsible for the registration and financing of the CYAC and it also supports the organisation of the CYAC Assembly. Currently, the CYAC is not functioning actively and this means there is no representation of youth at the central level. In addition, field research shows a lack of co-operation between the CYAC and LYAC. The CYAC is responsible for supporting LYACs and raising issues from municipal level to the central level.¹⁷

2. **The Local Youth Action Councils**¹⁸ (LYACs) operate in all 38 municipalities and engage with public authorities and youth organisations in supporting youth initiatives. The establishment of CYAC is foreseen under Articles 10, 11 of Law No. 03/L-145. The LYACs are an advisory formation of youth organisations that operate at the local level and represent the interests of youth organisations and young people in local government institutions. Administrative Instruction No. 9/2010 for Responsibilities and Procedures of the Establishment and Functioning of Youth Action Councils in Kosovo clearly states the roles and responsibilities of LYACs. Those mainly include the following.

- Representation of municipality youth organisations where they operate at the local level.
- Addressing youth issues to municipal structures, other public and private bodies and the CYAC.
- Providing opinions and advice to municipalities on actions needed regarding youth.
- Presenting views on legal documents and other documents developed at municipal level regarding youth.
- Participating in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies related to youth.

¹⁶ Western Balkan Youthlab (WBYL), Mapping of youth policies and identification of existing support and gaps in financing of youth actions in the Western Balkans – Kosovo Report Prishtina, January 2021, p. 25.

¹⁷ Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Concept document on youth, October 2022, p. 14.

¹⁸ For more information, see: Policy paper on functioning of local youth action councils in Kosovo (2018), available at: https://acdc-kosovo.org/publikacije/pub_1615233131.pdf.

- Participating and contributing to the development of youth action plans of municipalities.
- Organising annual Youth Conferences.
- Participating in and contributing to the drafting of the annual municipal budget.
- Planning youth voluntary work and activities for the year.

3. **Youth centres.** Youth centres are the functional spaces for the development and implementation of different youth activities within a certain municipality. Municipalities are responsible for funding the youth centres. In addition, municipalities are also responsible for offering a public space for youth centre usage. Youth centres are activated once a local NGO applies for the licensing of a centre and this is accepted by the municipality. In order to complete this process, the municipality selects a shortlist of NGOs via a public call and, afterwards, in close co-operation with the LYACs, the NGO who will manage the youth centre is selected.

It is also worth mentioning that there is no well-defined election procedure for the selection of an NGO that will function as a youth centre.

The lack of a specific budget line or dedicated funding for youth-related initiatives, including youth centres, in many municipalities in Kosovo can indeed pose challenges to the effective support and development of youth programmes.¹⁹ While the Assembly of Kosovo Youth, an independent youth organisation established by a group of young people in 2009, plays a significant role in advancing youth engagement and representation in Kosovo. With its presence in 20 out of 38 municipalities and a membership of over 500 individuals, this non-governmental organisation operates at both the central and local levels.²⁰

The General Assembly, as the highest decision-making body, elected their president in June of 2017, who remains in power. The Assembly of Kosovo Youth is active in the youth sector with a focus on the field of voluntarism and youth activism and participation. In addition, they participated in the working group to amend the LEPY.²¹

Despite all the mentioned mechanisms, as the concept document on youth states: “The problem with youth participation lies in the inadequate mandate, rights and responsibilities of each of these structures, while at the same time lack of communication between them. Leaving the youth mechanisms on one side, it is important to also mention that neither central level nor local level officials are aware of the importance of inclusion of youth in those processes”.

¹⁹ Concept document on youth, p. 15.

²⁰ www.facebook.com/kuvendiiterinjve/about_details?locale=sq_AL.

²¹ Western Balkan Youthlab (WBYL), Mapping of youth policies and identification of existing support and gaps in financing of youth actions in the Western Balkans –Kosovo Report Prishtina, January 2021.

5.3.3 Higher education student union(s)

According to the law on higher education and other regulation documents the universities must have a structure representing students in order to include youth in different decision-making processes at the university level. On student's organisation, [Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher education in the Republic of Kosovo](#) gives the right to students to establish one or more organisations that represent students and that contribute in fulfilment of social, cultural and academic requirements and the entertainment of students. The Article 33 "Students' organisations" of the mentioned law provides the following:

1. Statute or any other document establishing the higher education provider foresees the creation of one or more organisations that represent students and that contribute to fulfilling the social, cultural, academic and entertainment needs of students;
2. Public providers of higher education contribute financially to the establishment of student organisations, including in appropriate cases, capital and costs for premises and environment.

Following the law provisions above, higher education institutions in Kosovo have either Student Parliaments or Student Councils, according to Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.²² Based on their own approved statute, public and private Universities in Kosovo have the autonomy to organise internal structures for student organisation. These students' organisations are representative bodies that protect students' interests, participate in the decision-making process within university bodies and represent students in higher education structures. Student Parliaments or Student Councils include election procedure.

At the national level is the Student's Union of the Republic of Kosovo (SURK) structure. The procedure for establishment of the SURK is regulated by [Administrative Instruction No. 16/2015 on the Establishment and Functioning of the Student's Union of the Republic of Kosovo](#).

The objective of the SURK is to represent the interests and opinions of all students of the Republic of Kosovo (of all higher education institutions licensed and accredited).²³ The SURK is an independent student organisation at the country level holding the status of a public legal entity under applicable legislation. The organisational structure of SURK is set out in Article 4 of the Administrative Instruction (AI), and is structured as below.

²² See for example: www.umib.net/parlamenti-studentor/. Or: <https://uni-pr.edu/page.aspx?id=2,55>

²³ <https://masht.rks-gov.net/en/ai-mest-no-16-2015-on-the-establishment-and-functioning-of-the-students-union-of-the-republic-of-koosvo/>.

1. General Assembly (GA) – This structure shall have 51 members, with a minimum of 30% of female members. Members of the GA shall be delegated by the students’ parliaments and students’ councils, which represent the highest level of student organisation in higher education institutions.²⁴
2. President – is the key leading authority within the SURK and governing board. He/she is elected by the General Assembly with a majority of votes (50+1 vote) of the total number of voters by the members of the GA.
3. Governing Council (GC) – This structure is composed of seven members: one president, two vice presidents, with equal gender representation, and four other members. The GC is elected by the GA with a majority of votes (50+1 vote) of the total number of voters by the members of the GA.
4. Financial control of financial affairs – this structure consists of three members: an independent member from the field of accounting elected by the assembly; a representative of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; and a representative of the Ministry of Finance.
5. The Secretariat is responsible for the daily affairs of the SURK. The Secretariat staff members are appointed through a public competitive process by the GC.

Regarding the financial support (article no.14), there are different sources of financing, as outlined below.

1. Membership fees (€2 per year)
2. Government grant
3. Projects
4. Other sources²⁵

Article 18 sets out the criteria for the establishment of student councils. The selection of student councils is done each year with secret voting. Each class can elect one representative. Its functioning includes improving the learning environment, working conditions and interests related to the health, safety and welfare of students and to make representations to the governing board.

To ensure the multifaceted governance of education provision, the schools at ISCED level 3 and 4 need to establish a steering board that, besides other stakeholders, consists of one student representative. Student representatives are nominated by the student council, an advisory body established by the steering board.

²⁴ For more information, see Articles 5, 6 and 7 of AI No. 16/2015.

²⁵ <https://masht.rks-gov.net/en/ai-mest-no-16-2015-on-the-establishment-and-functioning-of-the-students-union-of-the-republic-of-koosvo/> pp. 6-10.

5.3.4 School student union(s)

The first level of youth participation is in the education institutions. Schools are the first step for young people where they are taught and given the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them, their peers and the school community. Law [No. 2002/2 on Primary and Secondary education in Kosovo](#) was enacted in Kosovo in 2002, which gave students the opportunity to become organised into councils, and therefore affect processes in education. Article 30 of the above-mentioned law sets out the creation of “pupil councils”, as below:

30.1 Each school board shall establish a pupil council for the educational institution consisting of at least one pupil from every class, elected by secret ballot, for all schools at level 2 or 3.

30.2 The functions of the pupil council shall be to work towards the improvement of the learning environment, working conditions and welfare interests of pupils and to make representations on these matters to the school director and board.

Also, the same definition of the pupil councils is given in the framework of [Law No. 04/L –032-2011 on Pre-University Education](#) that regulates pre-university education and training in Kosovo, considering the ISCED levels 0 to 4 which includes education and training for children and adults. Article 18 sets out the criteria for the establishment of pupils’ councils, as below.

1. The governing board of each school of ISCED Levels 2 and 3 shall establish a pupil council which shall be comprised of at least one pupil elected by each class, elected annually through secret vote.
2. The function of the pupil council is to work on improving the learning environment, working conditions and interests related to the health, safety, security and welfare of pupils and to make representations to the governing board.

According to the mentioned acts, each primary and secondary school should have a pupil council but without decision-making rights.

5.3.5 Other bodies

No documents suggest that other bodies exist in Kosovo.

5.4 Young people’s participation in policy making

5.4.1 Formal mechanisms of consultation

The legislative framework in Kosovo includes mechanisms to facilitate citizen participation in decision-making processes at both the national and local levels. Regulation No. 13/2013 on Governmental Legal Service plays a crucial role in streamlining the initiation, drafting, review and approval of normative acts by the government. This regulation mandates the need for both preliminary consultations and public consultations for all normative acts. In particular, Article 10 of this regulation establishes criteria that stipulate the timing of consultations, requiring them to occur both before and during the drafting process. [Regulation No. 05/2016 on Minimum Standards for Public Consultation Process](#) was approved on the 86th meeting of the Government of Kosovo, with Decision No. 06/86, dated 29.04.2016. Regulation No. 05/2016 aims to promote and ensure a public consultation process between public authorities, interested parties and the public, for an inclusive participation process of policy making and decision making of public interest and increasing transparency and accountability of public bodies towards interested parties and the public.

This document defines the minimum standards, principles and procedures of the public consultation process between public authorities, interested parties and the public in the process of drafting policies and legislation. Article 7 sets out the public consultation forms and techniques, as below.

1. Public consultation forms and techniques include, but are not limited to:
 - 1.1. consultations in writing and electronically;
 - 1.2. publication on the website;
 - 1.3. public meetings;
 - 1.4. conferences;
 - 1.5. meetings with interest groups;
 - 1.6. workshops;
 - 1.7. interviews/face-to-face meetings;
 - 1.8. opinion surveys;
 - 1.9. discussion voting;
 - 1.10. panels with citizens;
 - 1.11. Stands on the street.²⁶ (Note: this is the word used in the law)

[Administrative Instruction No. 06/2018 on Minimum Standards of Public Consultation in Municipalities](#) aims to promote and ensure the participation of citizens and other interested parties by the local authorities at the local level of the policy-making and decision-making process to promote municipal transparency, as well as influence the development of

²⁶ <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=15036> pp. 8-9.

sustainable policies of general interest. This document sets out the rules, principles, forms, procedures and the minimum standards for public consultation in municipalities during the drafting of the municipal policies and bylaws. Article 10 sets out the public consultation forms and techniques, as below.

1. The forms and techniques of public consultation shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - 1.1 public consultative meetings;
 - 1.2. written and electronic consultations;
 - 1.3. publication on the municipal website;
 - 1.4. publications in the Government Public Consultation Platform, integrated as a link on the municipal official website;
 - 1.5. publications on additional electronic platforms if they are active in the municipality;
 - 1.6. conferences;
 - 1.7. consultations with certain groups of interests;
 - 1.8. interviews;
 - 1.9. opinion surveys;
 - 1.10. panels with citizens;
 - 1.11. stands on the street;
 - 1.12. meetings with councils of villages, neighbourhoods and urban settlements;
 - 1.13. meetings with citizens in certain neighbourhoods, villages and settlements.

In 2017, an electronic [public consultation platform](#) was established in Kosovo. The platform is a compulsory tool to be used during consultations on all primary and secondary legislation, policy documents and strategic and planning documents. The electronic public consultation platform is accessible for every citizen who is interested in every draft document that is in consultation phase.

5.4.2 Bodies promoting youth participation

In the above-mentioned documents there is no prescriptive mechanism dedicated to consultations with young people in Kosovo. The inclusion of young people in the consultation process remains a challenge. As defined in the Concept Document on Youth, youth NGOs and their participation in decisions at both local and central level is visibly low and there are many reasons for this problem:

- lack of awareness among young people of the existing mechanisms for participation in decision making, at both local and central level;
- lack of knowledge of youth organisations about the inclusion of young people in such processes;

- lack of communication and co-ordination between the central and local level and youth organisations about the opportunities and/or public meetings;
- lack of sustainable mechanisms and communication channels.²⁷

5.4.3 Information on the extent of youth participation

There is no information on the extent of youth participation.

5.4.4 Outcomes

On October 2022 the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports prepared a “[Concept document on youth](#)”. The document outlines a set of problems, options, recommendations and interventions regarding the youth sector at national and local level. However, there is no evidence of concrete outcomes of these measures and recommendations outlined in concept document.

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

There is some evidence of the initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people. A large consultation process took place during the drafting process for the concept document on youth, with a particular focus on the components outlined below.

- **Inclusivity:** the consultation process for the concept document was designed to be inclusive, involving a wide range of stakeholders, including youth officers, representatives from government and non-governmental organisations, members of LYACs, students from schools and universities, among others. This inclusivity ensures that a diverse set of voices and perspectives are considered.
- **Online and in-person engagement:** the use of both in-person and online meetings for consultations reflects an adaptable approach that takes into account the availability and preferences of stakeholders, especially considering the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Transparency:** the publication of the document for prior consultation, the three-day deadline for comments and the subsequent response to technical issues demonstrate a commitment to transparency and responsiveness to stakeholder input.

²⁷ Concept document on youth, p. 11.

- Ongoing consultation: the fact that the consultation process for the draft law on youth is ongoing highlights an ongoing commitment to engaging youth representative bodies and other relevant actors in the legislative process.

These efforts have contributed to the promotion of youth participation in decision-making processes and the development of policies and laws that directly affect young people in Kosovo. They also emphasise the importance of open dialogue and engagement between government institutions and youth stakeholders to ensure that the needs and aspirations of young people are considered and addressed effectively.

5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

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

There is no specific national strategy on youth participation in Kosovo. Youth participation is specifically documented in the [Youth Strategy 2019-2023](#) (Strategjia për Rininë 2019-2023) as the first strategic objective on “mobilising youth for participation, representation and active citizenship”. It aims to improve the situation of youngsters aged between 15 and 24, including all parties of interest from the governmental and non-governmental sectors.

5.5.2 Scope and content

The Youth Strategy 2019-2023 (and the action plan) aims to make young people in the Republic of Kosovo active, responsible, healthy, safe and educated citizens who live dignified and quality lives, and who are prepared to actively contribute to the development of responsible and accountable society. It defines framework objectives for the national, regional and local levels.

The strategy defines three main strategic objectives:

Strategic objective 1: mobilising youth for participation, representation and active citizenship

Strategic objective 2: providing skills and preparing youth for the labour market

Strategic objective 3: a healthy and safe environment for young people

The first strategic objective is divided into three specific objectives where each of them has a set of specific activities. In this regard the information below outlines the focus of the objectives and activities related to youth participation.

1.1 Consolidation, functionalisation and empowerment of youth organisations (followed by six sub-objectives/ activities)

1.2 Consolidation of youth legislation

Activity 1.2.1: promoting legal mechanisms to increase participation in decision making

Activity 1.2.2: conducting research into the state of the youth sector and regular monitoring of the applicability of legislation regarding participation

Activity 1.2.3: creating a digital platform for primary and secondary legislation, legal initiatives, youth policies, local strategies and action plans serving all youth organisations

1.3 Support for youth mobility (followed by four sub-objectives/activities)

Activity 1.3.1: raising awareness of the youth community about active participation and active citizenship

1.4 Developing volunteering (followed by four sub-objectives/activities)

5.5.3 Authority responsible for the implementation of the strategy

The [Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports](#) of the Republic of Kosovo is the body responsible for the co-ordination of the state policy towards youth within the framework of the Youth Strategy. Policies and programmes targeting youth are implemented by a number of other public authorities at the central and local level. The current legislative framework does not provide a cross-sectoral approach to the youth sector.

According to the strategy, the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and action plan is an integral part of the tasks and responsibilities of the divisions within the Department of Youth at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. There are no reports available on the website of the ministry.

5.5.4 Revisions/updates

The commencement of the first phase for drafting the National Strategy for Youth 2024-2032 and the Action Plan 2024-2026 in May 2023, as announced by Prime Minister Kurti, marks a significant step in shaping the future of youth policy and development in Kosovo. This process is considered a policy-making reform and is expected to serve as the primary guiding document for youth-related initiatives.²⁸

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

²⁸ <https://teve1.info/kurti-strategjia-shteterore-per-rini-do-te-jete-reforme/> (the article is available only in Albanian).

5.6.1 The legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is responsible for developing and implementing the relevant legislation for the establishment and functioning of organisations, clubs, groups and youth associations. The Department of Youth at the ministry is the highest level of the hierarchy responsible for the drafting of legislation on youth, the implementation of those legislative acts, the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and the distribution of funding for youth NGOs.

Based on Law No. 03/L-145 on Empowerment and Participation of Youth, a youth organisation is defined as a non-profit organisation, established in accordance with the legislation in force, where most members are young. Having a separate definition for NGOs who are managed by youth is necessary, however this definition has not brought the intended aims because the youth organisations are not being treated any differently from the other non-governmental organisations. More specifically, the term youth NGO does not provide any benefits for youth. In Kosovo, [Law No. 06/l –043 on Freedom of Association in Non-governmental Organisations](#) serves as the legal framework also for the formation of youth organisations. This law regulates the establishment, registration, operation, suspension, termination, prohibition of activities and deregistration of non-governmental organisations in the Republic of Kosovo. In Article 10, “Freedom to seek, receive and use resources” is defined as: “The NGO has the right to seek, receive and use financial, material and human resources, whether domestic, foreign or international, for the realization of its objectives and activities”. Another important document that provides the legal framework for funding programmes and projects of CSOs with public interest is the [Governmental Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society 2019-2023](#).

The municipal level also funds youth organisations. Municipalities have no dedicated budget code for youth. The support is allocated from the category of subventions and, therefore, they are fully at the discretion of the municipality.

5.6.2 Public financial support

The government and its ministry departments, as well as municipalities, have funds allocated for CSOs. [Regulation MF – NR – 04/2017 On criteria, standards and procedures on public funding of NGOs](#) defines the criteria, standards and basic procedures for public funding of NGOs, with the purpose of establishing a transparent and accountable system and for financing with public funds programmes and projects pertaining to the public interest of NGOs in Kosovo. In Kosovo there is a [central government platform for public financing of civil society organisations in Kosovo](#), which is under the responsibility of the Office of the Prime Minister. It includes financial support provided to NGOs from all central budgetary institutions as well as

municipalities in Kosovo. The data can be searched for by year, institution or name of the NGO. For example, in 2022 the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports financed 86 NGOs. Every year the Office of the Prime Minister prepares [annual reports](#) regarding the financing of NGOs.

5.6.3 Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

There are no large-scale initiatives aiming to increase the diversity of young people participating in youth organisations.

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

5.7.1 Policy framework

A specific national strategy for social and civic competences does not exist in the Republic of Kosovo. The framework for social and civic competences in Kosovo is [Law No. 04/L –032 on Pre-University Education in Kosovo](#). The law stipulates as one of the main purposes of pre-university education: “to prepare the pupil for a responsible life in the spirit of good understanding, peace, tolerance, gender equality and friendship with members of all communities in the Republic of Kosovo”.²⁹ Based on Article 24, the Kosovo Curriculum, Standards and Assessment Agency is responsible for the draft of the [Kosovo Curriculum Framework \(KCF\)](#). The curriculum reform of 2011 was heavily influenced by the key competences for lifelong learning recommended by the European Commission.³⁰ The 2011 KCF is an umbrella document that outlines the vision and goals for education in Kosovo, which is further defined and detailed in other curriculum documents for primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary levels. The vision presented in the Curriculum Framework is for developing and implementing a learner-centred and competence-based curriculum in Kosovo integrating and reflecting the fundamental values and principles of human rights, living together, social justice and inclusiveness.

Education for democratic citizenship is part of the curriculum, with specific attention on the multi-ethnic and multicultural character of Kosovo society, so as to enable students to deal constructively and positively with issues of diversity and differences; and to cultivate and

²⁹ Article 1, paragraph 2.5.

³⁰ Armend Tahirsylaj (2020): What kind of citizens? Constructing ‘Young Europeans’ through loud borrowing in curriculum policy-making in Kosovo, *Comparative Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2020.1845066>.

respect their own rights and the rights of others, regardless of their ethnicity, language, culture, religion, gender, age, social and educational background and economic situation.³¹

The development of students' citizenship is the sixth main competence defined in the framework of the curriculum, as follows.

- Communication and expression competences → Effective communicator
- Thinking competences → Creative thinker
- Learning competences → Successful learner
- Life, work and environment-related competences → Productive contributor
- Personal competences → Healthy individual
- Civic competences → Responsible citizen

5.7.2 Formal learning

The Kosovo curriculum structure is based on six broad learning areas that are continual from early childhood education through upper-secondary education and are common to both general and vocational education:

- Communication and expression
- Mathematics
- Sciences
- Society and environment
- Health and well-being
- Life and work³²

In order to address and promote the values and practices of living together, as well as sustainable development, human rights and democratic citizenry, social justice and social cohesion, cross-cutting issues are integrated throughout the curriculum.

There are other curriculum themes taught across various subjects. Common examples include peace education, human rights and citizenship education, gender issues, communication skills and intercultural education. Some of the cross-cutting issues and dimensions include:

- Education for democratic citizenship and human rights
- Education for peace and tolerance

³¹ Curriculum Framework For pre-school, primary, secondary and post-secondary education, MEST, Pristina, April 2010, p. 28.

<https://www.acce.al/sites/default/files/download/research/Curriculum%20Framework%20in%20Albania.pdf>

³² Ibid., pp. 43-44.

- Personal development and life skills
- Education for sustainable development
- Gender equality
- Intercultural education
- Media education/literacy
- Health education, including sex education
- ICT education/literacy and e-learning
- Career awareness
- Preparation for life and work
- Economic awareness
- Financial literacy
- Entrepreneurial education
- Language and communication skills across the curriculum.

Cross-cutting issues are integrated into the curriculum through appropriate themes and lesson units as well as appropriate classroom practices (such as group work, project work, community service) and integrated topics for assessment.

5.7.3 Non-formal and informal learning

Kosovo's adoption of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in 2008 marked an important step in the country's education and training system. Being one of the early adopters of NQFs in the region reflects Kosovo's commitment to aligning its education and qualifications system with international standards.³³

Formal and non-formal education, employment and active youth participation remain high priorities in the government's plan.³⁴ In 2015, the government adopted [Administrative Instruction No. 04/2015 on Informal Education of Youth](#) to increase awareness and promote the participation of youth in various forms of non-formal education. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports at the central level and municipalities at the local level are responsible for the implementation of Administrative Instruction, and identification of needs for non-formal education. The instruction provides that all providers and programmes need to be accredited by the Kosovo Qualifications Authority.

³³ www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/nqfs-online-tool/countries/kosovo-2020.

³⁴ https://www.rcc.int/youth_db/files/user/docs/1.3_Kosovo_Report.pdf pp. 33.

In Kosovo, there are a number of civil society organisations conducting various education projects intended for increasing youth participation in Kosovo. Civil society organisations therefore provide educational activities, produce different didactic material and offer a platform for civic engagement practice. There are several structured projects/programmes aimed at young people covering different perspectives of the youth participation field.

It is worth mentioning the project “Concepts of Citizenship among Primary School Students in Kosovo” from the [Kosovo Education Centre](#). The main objective of the project was to assess the level of understanding of citizenship concepts among Kosovo students and define modalities for interventions.

5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

The [Central Election Commission](#) is responsible for distributing information about democratic rights for young people and every citizen of the Republic of Kosovo. Before each election and referendum, the CEC conducts an election campaign to inform citizens (especially young voters) about the elections and their right to vote. During the months of November and December 2022, the [Central Election Commission](#) implemented the project “Information and education of young voters for elections”. The aim of the project was to inform and educate young people who have turned 18 or will turn 18 by the next election. Around 24 000 young people had the opportunity to get information about their right to vote, the electoral process, electoral system and procedures, as well as the impact that their vote can have in determining the selection of their representatives.³⁵

Besides the Central Election Commission, CSOs are responsible for many campaigns on democratic rights and democratic values in Kosovo. For example, the [Balkans Policy Research Group](#) (NGO) has implemented a training programme “Youth in Politics”. The programme aims to develop skills among young individuals and political parties to overcome some of the most critical hurdles in their political engagement. Another NGO, [Debat Centre](#), is actively involved in projects and programmes related to critical thinking and democracy, or information sessions about the political engagement of young people.

5.9 e-participation

In Kosovo there are no policy documents that focus on youth e-participation.

³⁵ The above information is available only in Albanian and Serbian languages, not in English.

5.10 Current debates and reforms

5.10.1 Forthcoming policy developments

The advancement of the legal framework for youth empowerment in Kosovo has been influenced significantly by the country's alignment with European standards and its desire to integrate into the European community. As a result of these efforts, the [draft Law on Youth](#) has been developed and is now in the final stages of approval. This draft law comprises 27 articles and reflects numerous improvements and changes in various aspects of youth empowerment and participation in Kosovo. It signifies the country's commitment to fostering youth engagement, enhancing opportunities and addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by young people in Kosovo.

For example; the age group for young people will be extended to 29 from 24. The draft law has included structural changes related to the name and organisation of the Central Youth Action Council (CYAC) and Local Youth Action Councils (LYACs). The draft law foresees the CYAC to be renamed the National Youth Council, with several changes. Based on the draft law "The Central Youth Council is an advisory and advocacy mechanism for youth issues which serves as a platform for cooperation between the Government, Local Councils and organizations in the youth sector. The Central Youth Council has the responsibility to identify the needs of young people and propose the design of policies and programs for the improvement of the youth sector" (Article 15).

The draft law foresees the Local Youth Action Councils to be renamed as Local Youth Councils. Based on the draft law "The Local Youth Councils are advisory and advocacy mechanisms for youth issues that serve as a platform for cooperation between local public institutions, the Central Council and organizations in the youth sector in the respective municipalities. They are responsible for identifying the needs of young people in the respective municipalities and supporting the participation of young people in the processes of drafting and evaluating youth policies at the local level" (Article 16).

The draft law also foresees some important improvements in the recognition of the voluntary work as work experience (Article 21).³⁶

³⁶ <https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/viewConsult.php?ConsultationID=41972>

5.10.2 Ongoing debates

The preparation of the “[Concept document on youth](#)” by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in October 2022 is a significant milestone in the development of the youth sector in Kosovo. This document represents a comprehensive analysis of the state of the youth sector in the country, and it is rooted in the requirements outlined in the National Youth Strategy 2019-2023. Some of the key highlights of this development include the following.

1. **Improving the legislative framework:** the document’s objectives align with the goal of enhancing the legislative framework related to the youth sector in Kosovo. This is essential for adapting to the evolving needs of young people and incorporating the latest trends and best practices in this field.
2. **Updating the law on youth:** the ministry has identified the need to update the existing Law No. 03/L-145 on Empowerment and Participation of Youth to better address the current needs and aspirations of youth in Kosovo.
3. **Draft law in final approval stage:** the process of updating the Law on Youth is well underway, with the draft law now in the final stage of approval. This reflects a commitment to addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by young people in the country.
4. **National strategy and action plan:** additionally, efforts are being made to draft the National Strategy for Youth 2024-2032 and the Action Plan 2024-2026, which are in the early stages of development. These documents will likely shape the future direction of youth policies and programmes in Kosovo.

Overall, these initiatives demonstrate Kosovo’s dedication to fostering youth development, participation and empowerment, ensuring that the legislative and policy frameworks are responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of its young population.

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