

Youth Partnership

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



COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH POLICY IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA



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Contents

- 1. Context of national youth policy3
 - 1.1. Context of national youth policy3
 - 1.2. Principles of national youth policy4
- 2. Statistics on young people.....5
- 3. Actors and structures6
 - 3.1. Public authorities6
 - 3.1.1. National public authorities with competencies in the youth field6
 - 3.1.2. Regional and/or local public authorities with competencies in the youth field8
 - 3.2. Youth welfare services (comprising public and/or non public actors).....9
 - 3.3. Non-public actors/structures and youth services with competencies in the youth field10
 - 3.3.1. Youth Councils10
 - 3.3.2 Youth NGOs12
 - Associations of young people/for young people and their federations12
 - 3.4 National network(s) for knowledge on youth linking all actors in the field (policy makers, researchers, young people and their organisations, NGOs)?13
- 4. Legislation13
- 5. National Policy Programmes and Action Plans on Youth.....15
- 6. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth.....17
- 7. European dimension of youth policy.....17
 - 7.1. Council of Europe youth sector strategy and programmes18
 - 7.2. European Union youth strategy and programmes19
- 8. Further sources of information on youth policy.....20

1. Context of national youth policy

1.1. Context of national youth policy

According to Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, there were 6,982,604 inhabitants in Serbia in 2018, out of which 1,258,338 young people aged 15-30 – representing 18.02% of the total population. In comparison to Population survey from 2011, when the share of young people in total population was 19.74%, it's evident that the percentage of young people in Serbia continues to decline.

During the first five years of the 21st century, the responsibilities for youth in Serbia were under the Department for Youth within the Ministry of Education and Sports. This Department initiated a process of development of the National Youth Strategy, but soon the Department was dissolved due to the internal reorganization of that Ministry. Bearing in mind that at the end of the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st century, as a consequence of the social and economic crisis, many issues related to youth in Serbia emerged: rising and long-term youth unemployment that was related to an old system of formal education, the problem of brain-drain, poverty, economic and housing dependence on parents, it was evident that it is necessary to identify an institutional framework to address numerous youth issues. Thanks to the efforts of the initiative Youth Coalition of Serbia, **the Ministry of Youth and Sports** was created in May 2007. The National Youth Strategy adopted in May 2008, the Action Plan for its implementation adopted in January 2009, followed by the Strategy of Career Guidance and Counselling adopted in 2010, were the first steps in developing systematic solutions to support young people in different areas of social life.

The process of developing the National Youth Strategy was recognized at the European level as an example of good practice, due to involvement of all stakeholders, especially 16,000 young people, as well as grounded in the research on the position and needs of young people. In July 2011, the National Assembly adopted **the Law on Youth** which created a sustainable institutional framework for youth policy implementation, since the aim of the law is to create conditions for supporting young people in organizing, social action, development and realizing their potential for personal and social well-being. In parallel, Serbia has developed mechanisms for implementing these documents and for youth activism, such as: youth offices, local action plans, youth councils, youth associations and their federations, association of youth offices.

In accordance with the Law on Youth, on 24 January 2014 the Government issued a decision on the establishment of the **Youth Council**, a cross-sectorial body on youth issues, taking a significant step forward in the monitoring and further development of the national youth policy. Youth Council is an advisory body established by the Government at the proposal of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which promotes and coordinates the activities related to the development, implementation of youth policy and proposes measures for its improvement. This body is chaired by the Minister of Youth and Sports and has 24 members (representatives of ministries, provincial administrative body responsible for youth affairs, youth associations and associations for youth, youth offices, representative of national minority councils, experts), whereas eight members are the representatives of young people. As an advisory body, Youth Council ensures that the voice of young people is heard, so that young people can participate in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of public policy realization. By the end of 2019, the Youth Council had held 13 sessions.

Given that the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy was valid until the end of 2014, the Ministry of Youth and Sports commenced in 2014 the preparation of new document - **the National Youth Strategy for the period 2015-2025**. The Government has appointed a multi-sectoral Working Group with 53 members, there were 15 round tables with the aim to discuss the first draft of the Strategy, as well as five debates in the public discussion in Serbia, with the participation of more than 2,000 young people. Both, the recommendations from the Evaluation of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period 2008-2014, and the recommendations from the Review of the Youth Policy prepared by the experts of the Council of Europe made on the initiative of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, were included in the Strategy 2015-2025. The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 adopted by the Government in February 2015 represents a comprehensive document outlining the priority objectives which implementation should contribute to an active and equal participation of young people in various areas of social life. The National Youth Strategy defines nine strategic goals as desired changes to be achieved with respect to young people in the areas of interest to young people. The successful implementation of the Strategy will result in the improvement of:

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

The Action Plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period from 2015 to 2017 was adopted in August 2015. The Action Plan listed all accountable entities and participants in the implementation process and defined the funds for achieving these goals. In January 2016, the Government made the decision on the establishment of **the Working Group for Monitoring and Implementation of the National Youth Strategy** by 2018. The task of the Working Group was to propose measures to harmonize activities on the implementation of the National Youth Strategy according to the dynamics set out in the Action Plan, to monitor the implementation of the Strategy, to participate in the evaluation and to prepare annual informative reports to the Government.

After the expiration of the first Action Plan, the new **Action Plan for the period 2018-2020** was developed and adopted. The Action Plan specifies the indicators related to the level of performance of activities, implementation period (time required for the achievement of planned goals, results and activities), level of implementation (national, provincial or local), key implementers and participants in the process of realization, means of verifying the indicators of specific goals and activities, and defines the overall resources required for implementation. By adoption of the Action Plan 2018-2020, the mandate of the Working Group for Monitoring and Implementation of the National Youth Strategy has been extended up to 2021.

1.2. Principles of national youth policy

The Law on Youth stipulates that “**youth policy** shall mean and include all measures and activities of government bodies, institutions, associations and other actors directed at the improvement and promotion of the position and status of young people”.

The Law on Youth prescribes six **main principles**:

- Youth Support Principle;
- Equality and Non-Discrimination Principle;
- Equal Opportunity Principle;
- Principle of Raising Awareness on the Importance of Youth and their Social Role;
- Active Youth Participation Principle;
- Principle of Youth Responsibility and Solidarity.

These principles are also maintained by the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, whereas the principle of equality and non-discrimination was reinforced by emphasizing respect of human and minority rights.

Serbia recognises young people and their special and important role in the society. Young people are the present and the future of the society, a resource of innovations and a driving force of the development of society. Therefore, it is required to continuously and systematically invest in youth development and to establish a partnership between the youth and the state in order to increase the active participation of young people in society, encourage their social integration and ensure their inclusion in the development of youth policy. In that respect, the vision of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 is as follows: “Young people are active and equal participants in all spheres of social life, they fully develop their potential and contribute to personal and social development and well-being. Young people are supported by society; they create better living conditions and conditions for the development of potentials and actively contribute to the overall development of society”.

2. Statistics on young people

In Serbia, **youth or young people** are defined as persons from 15 to and including 30 years of age. Based on the assessment of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, there were 1,258,338 young people aged 15-30 living in Serbia in 2018, representing 18.02% of the total population. Out of 1,258,338 young people, 51.34% were men and 48.66% were women. This youth review by gender was similar to the distribution in global population. In the last seven years, the percentage of young people has decreased by almost 2%.

All information regarding the statistical database for Serbia is published on the website www.stat.gov.rs/en-US/#.

Number and percentage of young people (15-29) in global population:

Young people (15-29) in global population (data for 2018):	
Number	Percentage
1,166,404	16.7%

Number and percentage of young people (15-29) by gender in global population:

Young people (15-29) by gender in global population (data for 2018)	Number	Percentage
Young women	567,561	8.13%
Young men	598,843	8.57%
Total	1,166,404	16.7%

Despite this official definition of youth, following the practice of the UN and EU, in some segments it is usual to have also the statistic for the group 15-24 years of age.

In 2019/20 school year, 249,855 students attended classes in 517 secondary schools – 123,553 girls (49.4%) and 126,302 boys (50.6%). Schools/departments for students with disabilities were attended by 2,119 students - 807 girls (38.1%) and 1,312 boys (61.9%) - source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <https://www.stat.gov.rs/vesti/srednje-obrazovanje-pocetak-skolske-godine-2019/?s=1103>.

In 2018, 45,221 students graduated from all higher education institutions and at all levels of study in Serbia. Out of the total number of graduates, 18,488 or 40.9% were men and 26,733 or 59.1% were women. According to the way of financing the studies, 36.4% of graduates were budget beneficiaries, 49.8% were self-financing students and 13.8% were budgeting and self-financing (source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <https://www.stat.gov.rs/vesti/20190625-diplomirani-studenti-u-2018-god/?s=1104>).

According to the Labour Force Survey, in the fourth quarter of 2019 the youth unemployment rate 15-30 years was 19.6%, and of youth aged 15-24, 29.1%. Comparing 2018 data with 2014, the youth unemployment rate aged between 15 and 30 in 2018 was reduced by 12.2% and for youth 15-24 by 17.8%. The inactivity rate in the fourth quarter of 2019 for the youth 15-30 was 49.9%, while for the youth 15-24 was 68.5%. The NEET rate is statistically processed for three categories: 15-24; 15-29; 15-30. During 2018, the NEET rate for youth 15-24 was 16.5%, for youth 15-29 it was 20.1%, while 20.42% was recorded for the youth between 15 and 30 years.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports conducts annually the research on status and needs of young people. Actually, this research shows the position, attitudes and needs of young people in all nine National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 areas. The research for 2019 registered that: 38% of young people don't have a physical recreation, while 62% of them is engaged in sport professionally or recreationally; 72% of young people has visited some of the cultural events in the last year; 86% of young people spend its time on social networks on a regular or frequent basis; 24% of young people participated in volunteer activities.

3. Actors and structures

3.1. Public authorities

3.1.1. National public authorities with competencies in the youth field

The Ministry of Youth and Sports

Minister: Mr. Vanja Udovičić

Mandate: 2013 – ongoing

The official website of the Ministry: www.mos.gov.rs

Since 2007, the Ministry of Youth and Sports is in charge of: development and improvement of youth policy, implementation of national policy, national strategy for youth and action plans and programmes; encouraging young people to organize themselves and to participate in social activities; counselling and teaching young people about employment and volunteer work; encouraging non-formal education of young people; cooperation with youth associations in organizing international youth events in Serbia; development and improvement of sports and physical culture in Serbia; implementation of national sports policy and national strategy for sport development; participation in the construction, equipping and maintenance of sports facilities and sports infrastructure in Serbia; development and realization of international cooperation in the fields of youth and sports; realization of projects supported from the funds of the EU and international funds, donations and other forms of development assistance; creating conditions for greater accessibility of sports for all.

The Youth Sector within the Ministry carries out tasks related to: system, development and improvement of the youth policy; preparation and implementation of the national youth strategy, as well as action plans and programmes; the work of the Fund for Young Talents; encouraging young people to organize themselves and join together in associations and participate in social developments; protecting the interests of young people and helping young people to achieve these interests; advising young people and instructing young people about employment and volunteer work; encouraging non-formal education of young people; cooperation with youth associations and federations in organizing international youth events and conferences in Serbia; enabling youth associations from Serbia to participate in youth conferences and events abroad; monitoring and evaluation of the place and role of young people in Serbia; creating conditions for establishing and operation of youth offices; encouraging the development of youth policy and the work of youth offices at the local level; monitoring the implementation of youth policy at all levels.

In the Youth Sector, there are the following internal units:

- Section for Strategic, Normative, Legal and Operational - Analytical Affairs;
- Group for Cooperation with Youth Offices and Associations.

Number of people who work in the Youth Sector (April 2020 as a cut-off date): 9.

The Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia

The Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia was established by the Government with the aim of supporting the most successful students, who excelled in their academic achievements. Seated within the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Fund targets the same age group as the Youth Sector. The scholarships and prizes for nearly 3,300 high school students and university students are awarded annually. Since it has been under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, as of August 2008, the scholarships and prizes for more than 29,800 young people were awarded with over RSD 7.9 billion.

The Chairman of the Fund for Young Talents is Vanja Udovičić, Minister of Youth and Sports and the Members of the Fund are the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Minister of Culture and Information, the Rector of the University of Belgrade and the President of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Since 2010, the prize which is awarded to talented and successful high school and university students is named "Dositeja" after Serbian reformer and illuminator Dositej Obradović.

During the year the Fund announces three types of calls:

- Call for awarding scholarships to the best students at second and third degree studies at universities in the member countries of the EU, EFTA and at the world's leading universities;
- Call for awarding scholarships to the best students at the final year of undergraduate studies and MA academic studies at higher education institutions founded by Serbia;
- Call for rewarding high school students who achieved outstanding results at recognized competitions in the country and abroad.

More information can be found at <http://www.fondzamladetalente.rs/>.

Other ministries or directorates

Like in many European countries, youth policy approach in Serbia is cross-sectorial. Therefore, several ministries are responsible for policy areas concerning young people. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development is responsible for the area of formal education. For employment and social policy, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Economy are responsible. Other ministries involved in youth issues are the Ministry of Justice (juvenile delinquency) and the Ministry of the Interior (youth safety), the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Culture and Media.

Ombudspersons

In Serbia the Protector of Citizens is an independent and autonomous government body, responsible for the protection and promotion of rights and liberties. The immunity enjoyed by the Protector of Citizens enables the independence of his/her work. The Protector of Citizens focuses particularly on the protection of:

- National minority rights;
- Children rights;
- Rights of disabled persons;
- Rights of people deprived of liberty;
- Gender rights.

Respecting and promoting the concept of child's rights, established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), that came into force on 20 November 1990, the Protector of Citizens strongly supports one of the basic principles of the Convention – the principle of participation: listening to the child's opinion regarding the matters of his/her concern, and paying due attention to that opinion. In order to apply the principle of child's participation in practice in 2010 the Protector of Citizens selected 30 boys and girls from all over the country and established **the Young Advisors Panel** as a permanent form of participation of children and youth in the activities of this institution.

Deputy of the Protector of Citizens for child's rights and gender equality is Ms. Jelena Stojanović.

Parliamentary commission in charge of youth issues

In the National Assembly of Serbia, **the Committee on Education, Science, Technological Development and the Information Society** is responsible for youth issues.

Chairperson of the Committee is Zukorlic Dr Muamer.

3.1.2. Regional and/or local public authorities with competencies in the youth field

The Law on Territorial Organization of Serbia (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 129/07, 18/16, 47/18 and 9/20 – other law) stipulates that territorial organization of Serbia consists of municipalities, cities, the city of Belgrade and autonomous provinces. Currently, Serbia has 150 municipalities, 23 cities and city of Belgrade. Also, Serbia has five statistical regions: Vojvodina, Belgrade, Sumadija and Western Serbia, Southern and Eastern Serbia and Kosovo and Metohija.

Autonomous province of Vojvodina has established the **Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth** in 2002 which is in charge of monitoring and supporting the work of youth associations and youth offices, preparation of programmes in order to improve the position of young people and supporting the projects relevant to young people. The Youth Council of Vojvodina was established in 2012 at the initiative of the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth, with the aim to encourage and coordinate activities related to development and implementation of youth policy and to propose measures for its improvement. The Provincial Secretariat has developed the Action Plan on youth policy for the Autonomous province of Vojvodina 2015-2020.

At the local level based on the Law on Local Self-government (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 129/07, 83/14 – other law, 101/16 – other law and 47/18), the municipality through its bodies, in accordance with the Constitution and law, performs other tasks of local importance (e.g. in the fields of defence, protection and rescue, fire protection, youth policy etc.).

Development of youth policy at the local level represents a prerequisite for comprehensive response to the challenges the young people in Serbia face with, primarily to improve the quality of their life. One of the specifics of Serbia is the existence of youth offices. **Youth offices** are one of the important mechanisms for effective encouragement of youth policy development at the local level, as a service for programme creation and support of initiatives. As an integral part of the local self-government, their job is to explore the needs of young people, to launch and implement a local action plan, to establish cooperation with all relevant partners, to inform young people and to realize youth projects. So far, 137 local self-governments have opened a youth office. The process of establishing youth offices has been supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports through several measures which include: professional assistance to local self-government in opening a youth office; financial support to local self-government projects; support to capacity building of coordinators, as well as development of programmes and activities of youth offices in collaboration with international partners. It should also be noted that the capacity and structure of local youth offices are not the same. Some of them have specified position for the youth coordinator in job classification of the municipality, while others do not, so coordinators have to work on other contractual basis or as volunteers. Allocated budgets for local youth policy also vary depending on the level of local development.

Additionally, about 80 **local youth councils** – advisory bodies have been formed, through which local actors engaged in youth policy may establish cooperation in joint planning and working for youth. From 2009, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has supported the local planning process by a direct funding and in cooperation with international partners. As a result, there are 144 ever adopted **local youth action plans** and about 90 were in force during 2019.

3.2. Youth welfare services (comprising public and/or non public actors)

Centres for Social Work

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

Youth Counselling Offices

Young people represent a very sensitive population group, exposed to many risks. Their growing up is accompanied by numerous processes of physical, intellectual and emotional maturation. It's a period of identifying with peers and weakening relationships with parents and rapid technological development and social stresses are fertile ground for risky youth behaviour. Bearing this in mind, the Youth Counselling Offices have been established within the Health Centres in Serbia. They work closely with school children mostly in the sphere of reproductive health of young people, mental health, proper nutrition and physical activity of young people.

3.3. Non-public actors/structures and youth services with competencies in the youth field

3.3.1. Youth Councils

National Youth Council of Serbia

National Youth Council of Serbia (Krovna organizacija mladih Srbije/KOMS) is a federation of 108 youth associations and associations for youth, also a member of the European Youth Forum. The Youth Coalition of Serbia, a network which brought together five national youth associations was created in 2003 as a youth initiative with the aim to raise public and local awareness on the position of youth in the country and establishing an institutional body in charge for youth. The founding Assembly of KOMS was held in 2011. Advocacy is a core role of KOMS, but in addition, for its member organizations KOMS is also a service that provides them with capacity building activities. Apart from it, the network of KOMS associations helps the member organizations to strengthen their relationships and to act jointly.

KOMS implements four programme areas:

- Local programme;
- National programme;
- International programme;
- Capacity building programme.

Since 2019, KOMS has recognized the sustainable development as an additional programme area.

For more information: <https://koms.rs/>

The National Association of Youth Workers

The National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) was established in 2009 as a result of the initiative of civil society organizations that were dealing with the youth work. It consists of 54 youth associations which practicing youth work across Serbia. In order to define quality of youth work, NAPOR has adopted a set of eight standards that every youth work programme should meet. Besides that, NAPOR has adopted standards for two occupational levels in youth work – youth leader and youth worker. Based on these standards, the curriculum for education of youth workers was created,

which contains training for both occupational levels, as well as a mechanism for validation of previously acquired competences in youth work.

For more information: <http://www.napor.net/>

The National Association of Youth Offices

The National Association of Youth Offices (NAKZM) is an umbrella association of cities and municipalities from Serbia which have been established a youth office and engaged in developing of youth policy. An initiative to form NAKZM has been launched by coordinators of youth offices in order to improve the quality of work, visibility, networking and exchange of experience of youth offices at all levels. NAKZM was formally established in 2014 and currently it brings together 110 cities and municipalities. So far, NAKZM has implemented several projects aimed to improve the position of young people in local communities in Serbia.

For more information: <https://asocijacijaakzm.org/>

Young Researchers of Serbia

Young Researchers of Serbia (YRS) is an association that gathers young people around common interests, ideas and goals. YRS aroused from the research movement at Valjevo in 1969, but in 1976 it was officially established as a network of organizations, societies, clubs and sections with research programmes. Today YRS unites three thematically different but interconnected sectors – Youth Sector, Voluntary Service of Serbia and Environmental Protection and Conservation Sector. YRS has more than 3,000 members, mostly young people aged 15-30. The main scope of their work is environmental protection, environmental education, youth exchange and work with young people, as well as the promotion of sustainable development, scientific creativity and voluntarism. YRS has organized hundreds of research projects and educative programmes for young people in various areas of natural and social sciences. **Voluntary Service of Serbia (VSS)** is a volunteer exchange service centre founded in 1990 as one of the sectors of YRS.

For more information: <https://www.mis.org.rs/>

Youth federation of associations "Novi Sad European Youth Capital – OPENS"

OPENS is a federation of associations established in 2016. After the first candidacy of Novi Sad (the City entered the top five cities, but did not receive the title of the European Youth Capital 2018), youth associations and associations for young people in Novi Sad gathered and decided to support the city for the candidacy once again, but under different conditions. The City will be the title holder, but the title will equally belong to the youth sector. Six organisations from Novi Sad became the founders of OPENS Council. Along with the OPENS Team, the founding organisations are eager to create and establish the space and surrounding in which young people will have the support to realize their ideas, to actively participate in the community in which they live, to learn, to have quality entertainment, to work and to express their creativity. Since Novi Sad held the title of the European Youth Capital for 2019, OPENS was in charge for the implementation of the related activities and programme, as well as for the finding of the post-2020 sustainability model.

For more information: <https://opens2019.rs/en/opens-2019/>

Scout Association of Serbia

Scouting has a tradition of more than a century in Serbia. The Scout movement was founded in 1911 and for more than a century of existence and its work, the Scout Association has organized nine major meetings gathering over 20,000 scouts. Also, the members of the Association participated in

several international camps and the events organized by the European and World Scout organizations.

For more information: <http://izvidjaci.rs/>

Student's Parliament

By the Law on the Fundamentals of Educational System (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 8/17, 27/18 – other law, 10/19 and 6/20) the student's parliament is organized in the last two grades of elementary and high schools in Serbia. The Student Parliament is a legally guaranteed formal institution, which provides students with a democratic way of association to represent the interests of all students in the school, as well as student participation in decision-making that directly affects them. The existence of a parliament gives students the opportunity to give opinions and suggestions to professional bodies, the School Board, the Parents' Council and the principal on school rules. Their activity plan is an integral part of the Annual School Work Plan and they take part in humanitarian activities, sports and other competitions, organize collaboration with other peers and at the same time initiate actions to improve life and work at school.

Student Conference of Serbian Universities

According to the Law on Higher Education (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 88/17, 27/18 – other law, 73/18, 67/19 and 6/20 – other law) in order to fulfil the common interests of students as partners in the higher education process, the Student Conference of Universities and the Student Conference of Academies of Vocational Studies and Colleges are established. The Student Conference of Serbian Universities was established in 2010, representing at the moment 250,000 of students in Serbia.

3.3.2 Youth NGOs

Associations of young people/for young people and their federations

The Law on Youth regulates the definition of three different forms of youth organizations in Serbia: associations of young people; associations for young people and federations of these associations.

For the purposes of carrying out youth activities, improving conditions for personal and social development of young people according to their needs and abilities and for the purpose of including young people in the social life of a community and their informing, associations of young people and associations for young people may be established, in accordance with the Law governing the establishment and legal status of associations.

Association of young people shall mean any association, recorded in the registry and operating in accordance with the Law governing the establishment and legal status of associations, whose membership has no less than two-thirds of young people and whose goals or area of activity are aimed at young people pursuant to this Law.

Association for young people shall mean any other association recorded in the registry and operating in accordance with the Law governing the establishment and legal status of associations, and whose aims or area of activity are focused, among other things, on young people, in accordance with this Law.

All registered associations of young people and associations for young people may, for the purposes of pursuing common goals and interests, form federations, whose goals and area of activity are aimed at young people.

Young people may also establish informal associations whose aims or area of activity are focused on young people, in accordance with this Law, and which operate in accordance with the Law governing the establishment and legal status of associations.

Since the Law on youth prescribed that the Ministry of Youth and Sports shall maintain joint records of associations and federations based on the data obtained from the body responsible for their registry and based on the data submitted by associations, the Ministry of Youth and Sports launched this Unique record in 2012. At this moment, the Ministry of Youth and Sports data conveys 1,583 associations of young people, associations for young people and their federations registered in Serbia.

3.4 National network(s) for knowledge on youth linking all actors in the field (policy makers, researchers, young people and their organisations, NGOs)?

An initiative to establish **the EU Youth Dialogue Team** has been developed in 2019 within the Youth Council. The Team would include the representatives of the National Youth Council of Serbia, the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners, the National Association of Youth Offices, Foundation Tempus-National Agency for Erasmus+, Ministry of European Integration and Ministry of Youth and Sports. The main focus of the Team's work would be the EU Youth dialogue and the preparation of the youth delegates' participation at the EU Youth Conferences. It is expected that the Youth Council adopts the formal decision on the establishment of the EU Youth Dialogue Team during 2020.

4. Legislation

4.1. Articles of the constitution concerning youth explicitly

In **the Constitution of Serbia** (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 98/06) there is no reference to the definition of "young people" or "youth". Young people are mentioned twice, firstly within the right to work, emphasizing that women, youth and people with disabilities enjoy special protection at work and special working conditions in accordance with the law, and secondly stipulating that children under 18 years of age cannot be employed at jobs detrimental to their health or morals.

The Law on Youth

The Law on Youth (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 50/11) was adopted by the National Assembly on July 5, 2011. The Law defines the framework and conditions for supporting young people in organising, social activities, developing and reaching potentials for personal and social benefit, definition of the youth sector structure, with clearly specified competencies, rights, obligations and responsibilities, depending on the level of reference, recognising the autonomy of youth associations and umbrella federations. The Law stipulates establishing of the Youth Council, where young people will be represented together with other principal subjects in this area, and also establishing youth councils on the provincial and local level. In addition, the Law on Youth defines the role of youth offices, and determines public interest in the youth sector domain at the republic, provincial and local level. In the course of preparation of the draft, two stages of consultation process were carried out,

with the participation of all relevant youth policy stakeholders. During the first stage of the process, 45 round tables were organised with participation of 1,500 young people of youth associations and local institutions. Taking into account the results of this process and the analysis of local and European legislation, the first draft of the Law was created. In the second stage, 29 round tables took place in the regions of Serbia, with over 1,000 participants which lead to creating the new draft. Public hearings took place in six cities. Young people took active participation in all stages of the preparation, from the very beginning, in January 2010. Most solutions included in the adopted Law are the result of the requests of young people expressed during the consultation process.

In the previous period, the Ministry of Youth and Sports organized consultations with civil sector regarding the implementation of the Law. The result of these talks was that the Law on Youth should be amended in order to improve the mechanisms for empowerment and greater participation of young people in society, to enhance the role and responsibility of the umbrella federation and to determine the possibilities of establishment institutions in the field of youth policy.

Other laws

Other laws relevant for the youth policy include:

- The Law on the Fundamentals of Educational System (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 8/17, 27/18 – other law, 10/19 and 6/20);
- The Law on the Secondary Education (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 55/13 and 101/17);
- The Law on Higher Education (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 88/17, 27/18 – other law, 73/18, 67/19 and 6/20 – other law);
- The Law on Adult Education (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 55/13, 27/18 – other law, 88/17 – other law and 6/20);
- The Law on Dual Education (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 101/17 and 6/20);
- The Law on Dual Model of Studies in Higher Education (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 66/19);
- The Law on Volunteering (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 36/10);
- The Labour Law (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 24/05, 61/05, 54/09, 32/13, 75/14, 13/17, 113/17 and 95/18 – authentic interpretation);
- The Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 36/09, 88/10, 38/15 and 113/17 – other law);
- The Law on Public Health (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 15/16);
- The Healthcare Law (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 25/19);
- The Law on Social Security (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 24/11);
- The Law on Sports (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 10/16);
- The Law on Culture (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 72/09, 13/16, 30/16 and 6/20);
- The Law on Associations (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 51/09, 99/11 – other laws and 44/18 – other law).

Regional and local legislation on youth

Based on the Law on Local self-government (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 129/07, 83/14 – other law, 101/16 – other law and 47/18) the municipality through its bodies, in accordance with the Constitution and law, performs other tasks of local importance (e.g. in the fields of defence, protection and rescue, fire protection, youth policy etc.). Since 2009, 144 **local youth action plans** were adopted and about 90 were in force during 2019. The local youth action plan is a strategic document which defines priority areas for youth and activities that respond to the specific needs of young people in the community. It contributes to the implementation of the National Youth Strategy at the local level, as well as other strategies that affect the life of young person. By creating and

implementing the local youth action plan, local self-governments ensure: satisfaction of the needs of young people through creating measures and services tailored to the needs of young people; economical usage of existing resources; improvement of cooperation between local institutions and associations through its networking; efficient usage of the municipal budget for youth programmes.

5. National Policy Programmes and Action Plans on Youth

Youth Rule

In order to promote volunteering and support young people to contribute to a better life in their communities and being aware that most of the volunteers are young persons, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has launched in 2010 the national programme “Youth rule”. In the last ten years, more than 1,668 youth ad-hoc volunteer projects were funded, 197 international volunteer camps and 28 youth work actions. More than 15,000 young people from Serbia with their peers from different parts of Europe have contributed to the development of local communities. By encouraging youth activism and volunteering, environmental actions were implemented, international cooperation and youth involvement from sensitive groups were encouraged, health and well-being, as well as entrepreneurial way of thinking of young people were promoted.

Serbian UN Youth Delegates

Since 2017 the Ministry of Youth and Sports supports financially the project “Youth delegates of Serbia to the UN”, which includes the selection of the two youth delegates to the UN and their active work over a one-year term. The youth delegates participate at the UN meetings dedicated to young people and represent the voice of young people of Serbia. The main goal of this project is to enable young people from Serbia to take part at international youth events and to exchange ideas with their peers from all over the world about implementation of the Agenda 2030.

Action Plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period 2018-2020

The Action Plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period 2018-2020 specifies the indicators for monitoring the degree of implementation of the activity, the period of implementation (the time required to achieve the planned goals, results and activities), the level of implementation (national, provincial, local), accountable entities and participants in the implementation process and it defines the total funds for the implementation. The process of drafting the Action Plan started on the grounds of the Report on the Evaluation of the Level of realization of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period 2015-2017 with a presentation of the results research and recommendations for defining concrete activities in the future Action Plan, carried out by the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade. In December 2017, the Ministry of Youth and Sports in cooperation with the youth and the representatives of youth associations, as well as local youth offices, organized five consultation meetings by thematic groups in order to jointly review the results achieved so far, defined by the National Youth Strategy, as well as to define the priority proposals for the period until 2020.

The drafting process also included direct meetings with relevant institutions and organizations implementing youth policies. A set of in-depth interviews was carried out with relevant national associations and international and national donors. The public consultations on the draft were also

applied. In the Action Plan, a detailed financing plan for the activities was developed for 2018 and the cost projection was given for the three-year period 2018-2020. The Action Plan should help all the bodies, institutions, organizations and individuals, as well as all other stakeholders, to implement the goals of the National Youth Strategy. Accordingly, the Action Plan has precisely defined the roles, the responsibilities of the accountable entities, as well as the institutional mechanisms that should enable the achievement of the desired results and the achievement of the overall strategic goals of the National Youth Strategy. For each of the specific goal of the National Youth Strategy, activities, expected results of implementation and indicators (quantitative and qualitative) have been set up. Each of the activity is precisely defined in terms of deadlines, financing and monitoring of the implementation and evaluation.

Programmes and actions for specific target groups:

Project "Promoting Youth Employability"

The project "Promoting Youth Employability" was implemented from July 2015 to December 2019, by the German International Cooperation Organization - GIZ and the Ministry of Youth and Sports as a key partner. Over 12,700 young people were included in its actions (career guidance, active job search, entrepreneurship, professional internships, business incubators and social enterprises). More than 1,400 young people were employed/self-employed and 15 hubs and 20 social enterprises were supported. The value of the project was EUR 10 million.

The National Action Plan for Employment 2020 contains several interventions for unemployed youth such as: traineeship programme for youth with higher education; internship programme for unemployed persons with secondary education (including youth); subsidies for employment of unemployed (including youth); support for self-employment (including youth).

"Youth Employability and Active Inclusion" – IPA 2014

The project with a total value of EUR 4.7 million is funded by the EU under IPA 2014 and co-funded by the Government of Serbia through the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The project aims to ensure greater social inclusion of young people in Serbia by increasing employment, especially of young people through enhancing: youth activity, early acquisition of work experience and entrepreneurship practices and activation of social policy and welfare beneficiaries. The project is implemented via two contracts:

1. Service contract „Technical Assistance to Support Social Inclusion of Youth through Innovative, Integrated and Tailored Services” – signed on December 23, 2018. The project implementation period is 28 months (18/02/2019 – 18/06/2021);
2. Grant contract “Development of innovative, integrated youth tailored services and active inclusion models” – the implementation period of 24 projects within Grant Scheme is from 15-24 months, starting on December 24, 2018. Projects under the grant scheme are implemented by local self-governments, civil society organizations, social welfare institutions, social work centres, foundations and educational institutions.

Programme: “Support to Social Housing and Active Inclusion”

This programme is funded by the EU with EUR 20 million and will be implemented by UNOPS in collaboration with the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs. The final beneficiaries are local self-governments.

The implementation period is 36 months (01/12/2019 – 30/11/2022). The overall objective is to contribute to increased social inclusion of the women and men, girls and boys experiencing poverty and social exclusion, enabling them to live in dignity and take an active part in the society.

There are three results that the programme will achieve:

Result 1: Capacities of institutions/authorities/organizations providing housing and active inclusion services strengthened for effective and gender responsive planning and implementation of housing programmes and relevant support services;

Result 2: Adequate housing solutions provided to the most vulnerable women and men, girls and boys;

Result 3: Job, social, education, health care services, complementary to housing solutions, provided to the most vulnerable women and men, girls and boys.

Project "Sport in Schools"

The project is aimed to children from the 1st to the 4th grade of elementary schools financed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It's being implemented by the School Sports Association of Serbia. This project should contribute to the development of children, to meet the needs of children to be active, to develop a health culture and a habit of physical activity and training.

Incentives for young farmers

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management has adopted in 2018 a Rulebook on incentives for improvement the quality of life in rural areas by supporting young farmers. This activity has been running since 2018, whereby a young farmer can be 40 years old. The Ministry has introduced this measure in order to encourage the revitalization of rural areas by returning of young people to the countryside.

6. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth

Total funds planned in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 amount to RSD 15,201,435,707 (approx. EUR 130 million) with RSD 13,006,081,057 (approx. EUR 111 million) from the budget and RSD 2,195,354,650 (approx. EUR 19 million) from other sources. Funds for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy are provided in the budget of Serbia, as well as in the budget of the Autonomous Province and the local self-governments, with the planned contribution of the EU funds, the participation of the private sector, associations that carry out youth activities and with other national and international programmes and donors. The budget was calculated based on a detailed activity plan with clearly developed indicators. The necessary funds for the implementation activities were defined during the series of consultative meetings.

In 2019, the Ministry of Youth and Sports allocated almost EUR 2 million for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy.

7. European dimension of youth policy

In order to establish and promote international cooperation in the field of youth policy, the Ministry of Youth and Sports establishes contact with the relevant institutions from different countries and usually also determines the signing of **the agreement on cooperation** in the field of youth and sports.

The role of these agreements is to enable exchanges, encourage mobility of young people, as well as their participation in conferences and seminars, implementation of joint projects and sharing good practice examples. The agreements also contribute to more intensive exchange of relevant information, materials and publications of importance for youth initiatives and issues.

In the last 12 years, numerous memoranda of understanding on youth have been signed with European countries, namely with Greece, North Macedonia, Ukraine, Portugal, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus, Montenegro, Albania, Slovenia, Russia, Hungary, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Slovak Republic, Bulgaria.

Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)

The process of establishing RYCO began in 2014 at the WB Leaders' Summit held in Berlin, which highlighted the need for intensive cooperation in the region, especially among young people. The Agreement on establishment of RYCO was signed by the WB 6 Prime Ministers on WB Summit held in Paris, on 4 July 2016. RYCO represents independently functioning institutional mechanism, founded by the WB 6 participants: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region. The Head Office of RYCO is in Tirana, with local branches in all the capitals across the region (Podgorica, Sarajevo, Skoplje, Pristina, Belgrade). It is financed by the governments of the region and being also supported by the EU and other donors. RYCO supports the regional exchange of young people and their ideas, as a basis for future perspectives for cooperation in the region, based on values of coexistence, tolerance and respect for human rights and diversity, as well as commitment to inclusion and security. Since 2018, RYCO has supported 35 projects of youth associations and secondary schools from Serbia through three open calls, which made up more than 1/3 of all approved projects. The total value of approved projects is over EUR 850,000.

7.1. Council of Europe youth sector strategy and programmes

Annually, the Ministry of Youth and Sports pays contributions for the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card, Partial Agreement to the North-South Centre and the European Youth Foundation. For 2020, the amount of these contributions is EUR 21,957.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports encourages young people to be creative and to participate in the open calls of the European Youth Foundation and in different activities in the European Youth Centres in Budapest and Strasbourg. There were 997 organizations registered in the European Youth Foundation database at the end of 2019, whereas Serbia has the most registered organizations – 86. The Ministry of Youth and Sports was a part of the process of accreditation of the Ecological Centre "Radulovacki" according to the Council of Europe quality standards. This Centre in Serbia obtained the "European Centre Quality Label" in 2015.

The representative of the Ministry of Youth and Sports is a member of the European Steering Committee on Youth (CDEJ). Serbia also has the representative from civil sector in the Advisory Council on Youth 2020-2021.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence.

Serbia is going to participate in the next cycle of the Council of Europe's *Ilegend II* program as a member of the North-South Centre network. It will strengthen the position of the Ministry of Youth and Sports as national coordinator for global education at the national level by liaising with other actors.

7.2. European Union youth strategy and programmes

In line with the strategic commitment of Serbia to join the EU, the starting points for the preparation of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 were the EU Strategy for Youth - Investing and Empowerment, A Renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) and the Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-18) as basic references and directions of alignment.

The representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and youth associations took part in the EU Youth Conferences from 2014, and especially at 6th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue – EU Youth conferences held during 2017 and 2018 and participated in the process of developing 11 EU Youth goals.

Erasmus+ programme and the European Solidarity Corps are the EU's main tools for empowering young people in the Western Balkans. Since 2019, Serbia is fully-pledged member of the Erasmus+ programme and institutions from Serbia may participate for the first time in all parts of the programme as coordinators or partners in all projects, without restrictions.

Based on the general call for 2019, youth associations from Serbia were coordinators on 20 mobility projects with a total value of more than EUR 300,000, coordinators on three strategic partnership projects with the amount of EUR 135, 652 and coordinator on one project of youth dialogue with a total value of EUR 11,194. In the same period, youth associations from Serbia were partners in 360 mobility projects with the amount of EUR 8,832,351 and partners in 15 strategic partnership projects with the total value of EUR 1,793,204.

From the last year, youth associations from Serbia may participate in Acpala capacity building projects of cooperation with African, Caribbean, Pacific, Asian and Latin American countries. Youth associations from Serbia are coordinators on seven projects worth EUR 847,590 and partners in three projects with a total value of EUR 288,050.

Youth associations/institutions from Serbia still have the opportunity to be partners in the capacity building projects within the Western Balkans Youth Window, whereas project applications are submitted by youth organizations from the Western Balkans. So far, they participated in 25 projects with a total value of EUR 2,350,127.

Currently Serbia doesn't have full participation in the **European Solidarity Corps**.

Possibilities for organisations and participants from Serbia within the European Solidarity Corps are as follows:

- Organisations from Serbia can be partners within Volunteering projects, and can send young people from Serbia to European Solidarity Corps programme countries or receive young people from those countries, for short term and long term volunteering activities.

- Organisations from Serbia can submit an application and receive European Solidarity Corps Quality label, if fulfill quality standards. Additionally, an existing EVS accreditation is valued as an equivalent to Quality Label.
- Young people from Serbia can volunteer in European Solidarity Corps programme countries, and young people from European Solidarity Corps programme countries can volunteer in Serbia.

8. Further sources of information on youth policy

8.1. Websites:

- Ministry of Youth and Sports, www.mos.gov.rs;
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, www.mpn.gov.rs;
- Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, www.minrzs.gov.rs;
- Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia, www.fondzamladetalente.rs;
- Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, www.stat.gov.rs;
- Foundation Tempus – National Agency for Erasmus+, <https://erasmusplus.rs/category/youth/>;
- Regional Youth Cooperation Office, www.rycowb.org;
- Council of Europe – Youth Department, www.coe.int/en/web/youth/home;
- Office for Cooperation with Civil Society, <https://civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/>;
- National Youth Council of Serbia, <https://koms.rs/>;
- National Association of Youth Work Practitioners, www.napor.net;
- National Association of Youth Offices, <https://asocijacijakzm.org/>;
- Young Researchers of Serbia, www.mis.org.rs;
- OPENS 2019, <https://opens2019.rs/en/opens-2019/>;
- Youth Rule portal, <https://www.mladisuzakon.gov.rs/>;

8.2. Legal acts, studies, reports and publications:

- The Law on Youth, <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/Dokumenta/Omladina/zakoni-i-strateska-dokumenta/The%20Law%20on%20Youth.pdf>;
- National Youth Strategy for the period 2015-2025, <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Nacionalna%20strategija%20za%20mlade%20-%20ENG.pdf>;
- Action Plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the Period 2018-2020, <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Action%20plan%20for%20the%20implementation%20of%20the%20National%20Youth%20Strategy%202018-2020.pdf>;
- Evaluation of the realization of the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2017, [https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/Izvestaj%20o%20Evaluaciji%20AP%20NSM%202015-2017%20final\(1\).pdf](https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/Izvestaj%20o%20Evaluaciji%20AP%20NSM%202015-2017%20final(1).pdf);
- Research on the position and needs of young people in Serbia 2019, <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Polozaj%20i%20potrebe%20mladih%20u%20Republici%20Srbiji%202019.pdf>;
- Youth policy in Serbia – conclusions of the Council of Europe International Review Team 2015, https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/YP_Serbia.pdf