

1.3 National youth strategy

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Existence of a National Youth Strategy

The [National Youth Strategy 2016 – 2025](#) of the Republic of North Macedonia is a strategic public document. In February 2015 the Agency of Youth and Sport (AYS) ([????????? ?? ????? ? ?????](#)) initiated the process of development of new (the second) National Youth Strategy (2016-2025). The first one was for the period 2005-2015 ([????????????? ???????????? ?? ????? 2005-2015](#)). The process of creating of the National Youth Strategy evolved in three stages:

- Public call for participation in the working groups;
- Meetings of working groups within the priority areas identified in the Strategy;
- Public discussions to present the draft text of the Strategy.

The basis for initiating this process was the youth trends survey conducted by the Institute of Sociological, Political and Juridical Research^[1] in the period from September to December 2014. This National Youth Strategy, as a strategic document, was developed with the active participation of young people and representatives of relevant institutions who expressed their opinions and needs regarding the nine priority areas identified in the Strategy. Although youth and youth organizations were actively involved in the process of creation of the content of the strategy, after its adoption by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, there were reactions from [National Youth Council of Macedonia](#) (the largest and most relevant CSO that represents the interests and needs of the youth in the country) that the final document differs from the one the youth worked along with institutions for almost a year. They also stressed that the Youth Strategy is not adopted as a complete package along with accompanying documents and items that ensure its implementation and precise monitoring, i.e. there was no action plan, indicators and budget for implementation. The first action plan was adopted later.

The adopted National Youth Strategy in English, Macedonian and Albanian language can be found on the following website: <http://ams.gov.mk/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/969-strategija-za-mladi-2016>

The National Youth Strategy is followed by one action plan: 2016-2017 Action Plan for implementation of the National Youth Strategy ([???????? ???? 2016-2017 ?? ??????????? ?? ??????????? ??????????? ?? ????? 2016-2025](#)). In the end of 2019, the AYS started working on preparation of a new Action plan for 2020. The working groups were consisted of representatives of CSOs (youth sector) and state institutions, but there is still (December 2020) no public available information about the process.

[1] Institute of Sociological, Political and Juridical Research. "Youth Trends in Republic of Macedonia" *University St. Kiril and Metodij*, published December 2014. <https://www.docdroid.net/qsrt/finalen-izveshtaj-agentsija-za-mladi-i-sport.pdf> (Accessed on 01.11.2018)

Scope and contents

The content of the National Youth Strategy comprises strategic priorities, the key challenges that young people encounter, and long-term objectives, divided into thematic areas.

The actions set out by the Strategy should lead to improvement in the social and economic situation of young people and the creation of an environment that will enable youth to fulfill their rights, needs and interests. The interventions proposed in this Strategy are divided into 9 key areas, as follows: **youth participation, youth information, local youth work, education, employment and pre-employment support, culture, sports, health and quality of life.**

The National Youth Strategy 2016 – 2025 outlines 4 strategic objectives:

1. Providing a better standard of living and equal opportunities for a decent life.
2. Creating conditions for effective observance and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, and systematic integration and interaction of different categories of young people.
3. Creating opportunities for the involvement of young people in the monitoring and implementation of policies and decisions that affect them.
4. Equal access to quality education and other forms of personal and professional development.

As described above, the National Youth Strategy targets young people aged 15 – 29. Under this age group, the measures prescribed with the Strategy, will include high school students, university students, young unemployed people, youth with special needs (young offenders,

youth neglected in terms of education and upbringing, “phantom children”, talented children, children with above-average IQ, hyperactive children, and children with dyslexia).

Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

Successful implementation of the National Youth Strategy entails the broad involvement of all stakeholders and key actors who are involved, directly or indirectly, in youth development in the country. The roles and responsibilities of every stakeholder are clearly set out in this Strategy.

The Government as an institution with executive power in the development of the Republic of North Macedonia has a primary role in providing opportunities for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy by adopting and implementing cohesive and coordinated programs associated with the measures envisaged in the Strategy.

The process of strategy implementation and performance monitoring is coordinated by the Agency of Youth and Sport (AYS), though data collection and reporting is carried out by all institutions that will implement activities from the Strategy within their programs. The data are in certain planning processes that take place at national level. In order to standardize and facilitate the coordination process, as part of the Plan on Strategy Implementation and Performance Monitoring, the AYS prepared a set of tools/forms with which the institutions will present the collected data, as well as special reporting formats for reporting the achievement of planned results and objectives on a biannual or annual basis.

Local authorities are also responsible for implementation of youth programs and in their activities they are fully coordinated by the Agency of Youth and Sport. Some municipalities are developing local youth strategies in accordance with values of National Youth Strategy.

Other actors addressed by the Strategy are: the civil sector who must cooperate with local authorities and the business community in order to develop a comprehensive approach to addressing the most urgent problems faced by young people; educational institutions as key actors involved in youth development; business community by sharing its resources with institutions and civil society organizations; media; parents and young people themselves.

Revisions/updates

In March 2018, the Agency of Youth and Sport held the first consultations with youth organizations in order to revise the National Youth Strategy. In late 2018, the Agency conducted consultations with the state institutions in order to analyze the strategic priorities, but up to date (October 2019), there is still no information whether and what will be changed in the Strategy. In July 2019, the [AYS](#) held 2 meetings with representatives from CSOs and state institutions. During that meeting the need for creation of new Action plan was emphasized, as well as alignment of the National Youth Strategy with other relevant documents in the field of youth. Currently, there are working groups consisted of representatives of institutions and CSOs who are working on preparations of the new Action plan 2020. More precisely, there are 6 working groups for the following fields: Youth Participations and Youth Services; Education and

Employment; Sport and Health; Culture; Youth Standard; and Marginalized Communities.