

1.3 National youth strategy

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[Existence of a National Youth Strategy](#)

The [National Youth Strategy](#) (Nacionalna strategija za mlade) was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on 27 February 2015 for **period 2015-2025**. It represents a comprehensive document outlining the priority objectives aiming to contribute to an active and equal participation of young people in various areas of social life.

The Strategy represents a key mechanism for implementation, coordination and improvement of youth policy and for creating a supportive and respectful environment for young people and their initiatives.

The Strategy should help base Serbian youth policy on complete, systematic and comprehensive information on the status and trends when it comes to young people in all areas of society, in order to ensure the knowledge of young people.

In addition, the Strategy is followed by the Action Plans for its implementation. By the end of 2019, two action plans have been developed – for periods 2015-2017 and 2018-2020.

[Scope and contents](#)

The National Youth Strategy is a guide for working with and for young people, intended for all Youth Policy Actors, and it is also a platform for action at the local, provincial, national and international level.

As described in the National Youth Strategy, the Strategy lays down the basic principles of action, directions and expected results of all youth policy actors' activities (See [Glossary](#)) towards the improvement of social position of young people and the creation of conditions for full achievement of their rights and interests in all areas.

The principles of the Strategy are the following:

- Support for personal and social empowerment of youth;

- Respect for human and minority rights, equality and non-discrimination;
- Equal opportunities for all;
- Importance of young people and their social roles;
- Active youth participation and cooperation;
- Social responsibility and solidarity.

The Strategy is based on the Government's strategic orientation to work with and for young people. It seeks to ensure conditions for enabling young people to reach their full potential, participate actively in society while contributing not only to their own development but also to the development of society.

It aims at achieving that all sectoral policies recognize young people and their needs and potentials and facilitate their participation in the strategic decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The Strategy defines **9 strategic goals** aiming to enable the improvement of:

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

The Strategy describes specific problems, planned activities that will be conducted by the key implementers and expected results that should help achieve aforementioned 9 strategic goals.

Target groups identified within the Strategy are young people in general, including vulnerable social groups of young people. Regarding vulnerable social groups, the Strategy refers to the definitions of the World Bank, European Union and the 2003 Poverty Reduction Strategy paper for Serbia. In this regards, the Strategy includes different objectives that are related to the young people from vulnerable social groups, young people from NEET group, young migrants, etc.

When it comes to the **participation of young people and their representatives in designing of the Strategy**

, the Government appointed 53 members of the Working Group, representatives of all relevant public authorities and institutions, representatives of youth organisations, organisations for youth and their associations and youth policy experts. There were eight thematic groups for the development of the Strategy, in which the Working Group members and other stakeholders participated:

- employment and entrepreneurship,
- education,
- pedagogical work and training,
- health and well-being,
- youth activism and active participation,
- mobility and information,
- social inclusion,
- creativity and culture,
- safety.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

The Ministry of Youth and Sport is the top-level authority responsible for the coordination, development and improvement of youth policy, the National Youth Strategy, as well as other national plans and programmes for youth. **The Government** has the role in forming a working group responsible for Strategy implementation monitoring. The working group's tasks are to propose measures to harmonize the implementation of activities, monitor the implementation of the Strategy and take part in the evaluation and preparation of annual reports on the implementation of the Strategy. Throughout the process, the Ministry of Youth and Sport provides professional, administrative and technical support to the working group. **The Youth Council** is involved in the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy as well. All ministries involved in the work of the Youth Council prepare reports on the results achieved in working with youth and in the implementation of the Strategy. These reports are adopted at the meetings of the Council and publicly available on Ministry's website.

The main partners of the Ministry within the civil society at the national level are:

- National Youth Council of Serbia (Krovna organizacija mladih Srbije, KOMS) as the highest representative body of the young population;
- National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (Nacionalna asocijacija praktičara/ki omladinskog rada, NAPOR), a vocational association of youth organisations whose mission is to create and develop conditions for quality assurance and recognition of youth work with the aim of developing potential of youth and youth workers, who contribute to welfare of community and society;

- national associations of local youth offices that bring together coordinators of all local youth offices in Serbia.

To summarize, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Government Working Group for the implementation of the Strategy, and the Youth Council, are in charge of performing regular annual evaluation. The line ministries are responsible of preparation of the report for the Government. As for progress reports on the implementation of the Strategy, the Ministry of Youth and Sport and Youth Council are those institutionally in charge. The annual Progress Report on the implementation of the Strategy is submitted to the Government. The Progress Report is public and available to the general public. By the end of 2019, one two evidence-based evaluations of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy have been conducted.

- The [first evaluation](#) was conducted for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2008-2014.
- The [second evaluation](#) was for the implementation period 2015-2017 of the Strategy active in the period 2015-2025.

The first evaluation was conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the United Nations Population Fund in Serbia. It covered the following aspects of the implementation of the Strategy 2008-2014 and its Action Plan 2009-2014:

- sustainability;
- decision making;
- integrated youth policy;
- local youth policy infrastructure and implementation;
- governance, the role of politics and transparency;
- autonomy and dependence of youth civil society;
- reach;
- monitoring, evaluation and research.

Some of the **main conclusions** are that the implementation of the Strategy 2008-2014 led to establishing structures for youth policy, developing guidelines and competence frameworks for the delivery of quality experiences to young people through the infrastructure in place (governmental and non-governmental). Also, a lot of investment has gone into the training and capacity development of civil society organisations in the relation to participation in decision-making. In general, the evaluation observes a lot of competence for leveraging capacity, especially on the part of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, and a lot of constraints that have hindered more effective implementation. When it comes to the reach of the Strategy, the figures for direct and indirect youth participation in activities and projects show that there is a multiplier effect on national level.

[The second evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan 2015-2017 of the Strategy 2015-2025](#) was conducted by the [Institute of Economic Sciences](#) with objectives to:

- Identify the effects of realized activities;
- Assess the level of implementation of the Action Plan 2015-2017;
- Identify the factors that have facilitated or impeded the achievement of these results, together with partnerships, capacity building and technical support for implementation;
- Define recommendations for the development of a new three-year Action Plan for 2018-2020.

The evaluation reports that the Action Plan has helped to implement the goals of youth policy defined by the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, so far. The evaluation acknowledges that the Action Plan represents the commitment of the Ministry of Youth and Sport to support the development and implementation of the youth policy. It also appraises the Action Plan as a good basis for the coordination of state bodies and all other institutions and individuals whose joint efforts contribute to better prospects for young people in Serbia. The evaluation states as well that during the three-year process of implementation of the activities, a significant shift was recorded in some areas (e.g. increase of youth participation, employment and entrepreneurship, youth work programmes, the number of young people involved in the work and activities of youth and for youth organisations, etc.).

[Revisions/updates](#)

The Strategy 2015-2025 was preceded by National Youth Strategy 2008-2014 which expired on the date of publishing the Strategy 2015-2025 (Official Gazette of the RS, no. 55/8).

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 has not undergone any revisions/updates since its adoption.