



Youth Wiki national description

Youth policies in Cyprus

2019

The Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. For the updated version of this national description, please visit <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>

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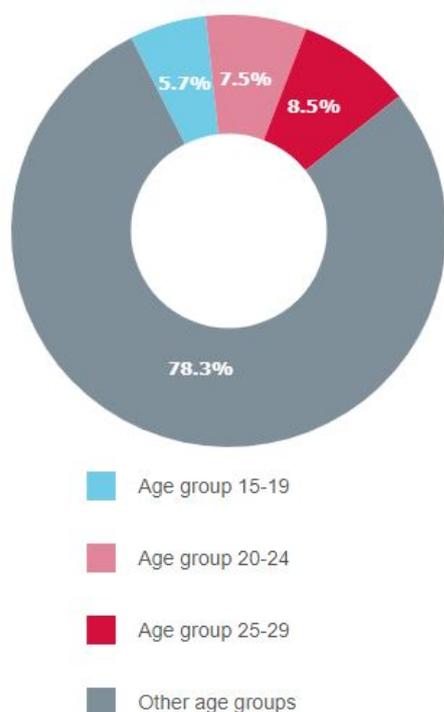
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Cyprus

Young People in Cyprus

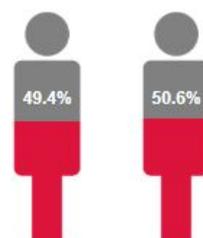
Ratio of young people in the total population on 1st January



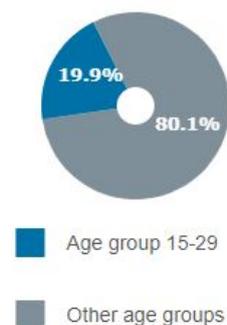
Total number of young people:

188 202

Ratio of men and women in the youth population



Ratio of young immigrants in all immigrants from non-EU countries



Youth Policy in Cyprus

Youth policy has become a key element of interest and work for the Republic of Cyprus. The government pays gradually more attention to youth policy and consultation with youth on youth issues grows into a priority in the agenda of state officials. In the previous years, the only policy focusing on youth was the [National Action Plan for Youth Employment](#). The rest of the policies were targeting the whole population (and thus young people too). However, the development of a comprehensive [National Youth Strategy](#) in 2016-2017 is a milestone in the field indicating the importance state officials pay on youth policy. The National Youth Strategy covers 8 fields, similar to the EU Youth Strategy. Although it is still a rather isolated document, outlining the main elements of other existing national policies targeting youth, it sets the priorities under each theme which should be implemented by other authorities for the upcoming years.

1. YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

The [National Youth Strategy](#) is a special feature of how youth policy is addressed in the country. The [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) representing the top national agency for youth plays a significant role in youth policy shaping, offering services and programmes.

A few highlights are the strong cross-sectoral perspective of the development and the future implementation of the National Youth Strategy, the creation of an evidence based strategy as well as the involvement of young people.

1.1 Target population of youth policy

The [National Youth Strategy of Cyprus](#) clearly defines the lower and higher age limit of the young population it targets as 14-35 years old. On the other hand, the [National Action Plan for Youth Employment](#) defines “youth” differently, targeting only youth between 15-29 years old. However, the most commonly adopted age range addressed in the field is 14-35, as defined by the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#), the National Agency for Youth. Within the main youth age group, youth NEETs (not in employment, education and training) is identified as a sub-group of the [National Action Plan for Youth Employment](#).

1.2 National youth law

Existence of a National Youth Law

There is not a National Youth Law in Cyprus and currently it is not discussed in the country.

Scope and contents

Not applicable.

Revisions/updates

Not applicable.

1.3 National youth strategy

Existence of a National Youth Strategy

A [National Youth Strategy of Cyprus](#) (Εθνική Στρατηγική για τη Νεολαία in Greek) exists in Cyprus. It consists of the government’s plan for empowering young people. It was introduced in 2017 and covers the period 2017-2022.

Scope and contents

The vision of the National Youth Strategy of Cyprus is of a place in which all youth in Cyprus have the necessary opportunities and empowerment in order to reach their full potential in all areas of their lives, and to be able to use their talents for the benefit of themselves and society. The Strategy covers the 8 areas of the EU Youth Strategy and sets 2 objectives in every area. Therefore, the objectives of the National Youth Strategy are as follows:

- a. Education & training
 - Objective 1: Assurance of quality education for all young people
 - Objective 2: Assurance of equal opportunities for education and training for young people
- b. Employment & entrepreneurship

- Objective 1: Development, support and promotion of entrepreneurship among young people
- Objective 2: Enhancement of the employability of young people and their integration into the labour market, while ensuring their labour rights
- c. Health & well-being
 - Objective 1: Equal and uninterrupted access to quality and youth friendly health services
 - Objective 2: Promotion of health and well-being and prevention of diseases
- d. Participation
 - Objective 1: Assurance of youth participation in all decision-making stages for shaping policies that reflect the needs and views of young people
 - Objective 2: Empowerment of youth for active participation in democratic life
- e. Voluntary activities
 - Objective 1: Development of a volunteering mind-set and promotion of voluntary involvement of young people
 - Objective 2: Official recognition and validation of skills acquired through volunteering
- f. Social inclusion
 - Objective 1: Ensure equality and respect for human rights
 - Objective 2: Create a mindset that promotes social inclusion
- g. Youth & the world
 - Objective 1: Creation and utilization of opportunities for mobility
 - Objective 2: Promotion of a universal, inter-cultural and environmental mind-set
- h. Creativity & culture
 - Objective 1: Creation of conditions for equal access and participation in the arts and culture
 - Objective 2: Development of conditions for artistic creation

The National Youth Strategy does not identify any specific target groups within the youth population, although 3 of the priorities included in the area of Social Inclusion target mainly young people with fewer opportunities.

When designing the National Youth Strategy, young people and their representatives (such as the [Cyprus Youth Council](#), [Cyprus Youth Clubs Organization](#), [the Cyprus Children Parliament](#) and the [European Youth Parliament](#)) have been consulted by the responsible public authorities. The following methods were used for consultations with young people:

The National Youth Conference 2015

Taking into account that the development of the National Youth Strategy should ensure the participation of young people in its creation, the Youth Board of Cyprus launched for the first time the [National Youth Conference 2015](#) (available only in Greek). The conference took place on 26 May 2015 and aimed to draft the National Youth Strategy.

More than 300 young people, from all over Cyprus and coming from diverse backgrounds were involved. During the second part of the conference, young people had the opportunity to submit their proposals for designing the National Youth Strategy. Thus, eight thematic workshops were organized, each one corresponding to the priorities of the European Youth Strategy. By the end of the conference, young people came up with concrete proposals that were taken into account when developing the Strategy.

Focus groups

In order to go deeper into discussions with young people about the National Youth Strategy, 9 focus groups were organized. The focus groups were organized in partnership with the [Cyprus Youth Council](#), the [Cyprus Youth Clubs Organization](#), the [Cyprus Children Parliament](#) and the [Local Youth Councils](#). Each focus group was consisted of 10 to 15 people (with a total of 147 participants) and their duration was about three hours. The ultimate goal of this method was to provide a space for dialogue and consultation among young people in order to reach specific recommendations that would be incorporated into the National Youth Strategy.

Interviews

In order to get a qualitative perspective on the opinions of the young people, especially those belonging to disadvantaged groups, nine interviews (on a 'one-to-one' basis) were conducted. Interviews were conducted with two subjects from each of the following age groups (13-17, 18-24, 25-29 and 30-35 years old). Also, considering the gender balance, there was a male and a female participant in each age group. The participants in this method included a teenager, a person from a remote area, an ex-unaccompanied under aged migrant from Africa, a person from Palestine, a Turkish Cypriot, a person with multiple sclerosis, an unemployed person and a gay person.

Questionnaire

Based on the recommendations drafted from the previous methods, an online questionnaire was launched. The questionnaire was open between 22/08/2016 and 18/09/2016, and collected in total 308 responses. The questionnaire aimed at prioritizing the existing recommendation based on a scale 'very important to not important'. It also allowed the participants to submit their own input on the objectives of the National Youth Strategy.

Last, it must be mentioned that the results of other kinds of consultations with young people, such as the Structured Dialogue national results and the Erasmus+ KA3 youth results were also taken into consideration.

Since the Strategy has not yet been enacted, no consultations concerning the implementation and revision of the Strategy have happened. However, the responsible public authorities intent to consult with young people about it.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

The top-level authority responsible for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy is the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#), which runs under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth.

The ministry primarily responsible for youth in regard to the National Youth Strategy is the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#). Representatives of the Ministry are members of the Monitoring Committee of the National Youth Strategy, which consists of the Cross-sectoral Working Group on Youth (includes all public services dealing with youth), the Youth Board of Cyprus and the Cyprus Youth Council. Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth has the role of submitting to the Council of Ministers the action plans, progress reports and future steps of the Strategy which are prepared by the Youth Board of Cyprus in close collaboration with the above mentioned bodies.

All government actors involved in the Strategy developed the first Action Plan of the Strategy (2017-2019) and then prepared a progress report regarding the implementation of the Plan. In addition to that, the Youth Board of Cyprus, organized in total 9 consultations with young people living in urban and rural areas with an aim to evaluate the first Action Plan, provide feedback and suggest new programmes or modifications to the existing ones so that they can be included in the second Action Plan. The main results of the progress report

and the consultations are not shared publicly, but they will be used for the development of the second Action Plan of the Youth Strategy 2020-2022.

At the moment, the National Youth Strategy is not yet integrated into the overall national development policy. It is a separated document that sets the main goals and objectives of the policies of the government that target youth.

Revisions/updates

The National Youth Strategy did not undergo any revisions. However, the first Action Plan of the National Youth Strategy is completed and it has been discussed in open consultations with youth as mentioned above. Their recommendations will be taken into account whilst preparing the second Action Plan (2020-2022) which will again include all the programmes and actions that governmental authorities should implement for the next years in order to achieve the priorities and objectives of the National Youth Strategy. Furthermore, preparations for drafting a new Strategy for 2023-2030 have started taking place.

1.4 Youth policy decision-making

Structure of Decision-making

Youth policymaking in Cyprus takes place at central government level.

The top-level authority responsible for youth policy is the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#).

However, the Ministry does not itself manage youth issues. Instead, it has under its auspices the Youth Board of Cyprus which forms the national agency dealing with youth issues in the country.

Many more institutional actors have been formally involved in developing the National Youth Strategy. These include the following:

The [Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment](#) which undertakes the immense responsibility to promote through an integrated coordination the protection and sustainable management of the environment, natural resources, and the sustainable management of agricultural, livestock and fisheries production. Related to social inclusion, the ministry aims to ensure a better quality of life for current and future generations.

The [Ministry of Justice and Public Order](#) which is responsible for the close review and consideration of the need to reform existing legislation in the wide field of public and private law, such as criminal law, legislation that falls within the general concept of the administration of justice, family law, legislation in the fields of equality, human rights, the treatment of offenders and others. Its activities furthermore include the promotion, in collaboration with the Supreme Court, of legislative and administrative measures for the unhampered administration of justice and the smooth functioning of the courts and criminological research for the formation of policies for the prevention and suppression of crime. It has also the responsibility, through the Police Force that the Minister of Justice and Public Order politically heads, of the maintenance of law and order, the preservation of peace and the prevention and detection of crime.

The [Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry](#) aims to secure Cyprus' energy supplies in order to meet the needs of the country with the least burden on the economy and the environment. In order to achieve the above objective, it implements activities related to the creation of necessary energy infrastructure, the integration and supervision of the internal energy market, the promotion of energy saving, the exploitation of indigenous renewable energy sources and the protection of sensitive consumers.

The [Ministry of Interior](#) whose mission is to formulate and implement human-centred policies. The anthropocentric action of the Ministry of the Interior is based on the following policy pillars:

- A qualitative upgrading of the services provided to the citizen
- Answering to the new housing plans put into effect on 1 January 2007
- Upgrading the role and restructuring of local government
- The intensification of efforts to reconstruct and simplify the processes that prove inadequate to meet the modern needs and needs of the citizens

The [Ministry of Finance](#) whose mission is to ensure conditions of macroeconomic stability and the sound management of resources and of the financial obligations of the State, in order to improve the quality of life of every citizen of the Republic.

The [Ministry of Health](#) whose mission is the continuous improvement of the health of the population of Cyprus, through the prevention of disease, and the provision to every citizen of high level health care, respecting the rights of every patient to high quality medical care delivered with dignity.

The [Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#) whose mission is the promotion of social justice within a free democratic system based on the pillars of social cohesion and social inclusion. The maintenance and continuous improvement of the standard of living and the quality of life of the working population and of society in general.

The [Ministry of Transport Communications and Works](#) whose mission is the design and implementation of policies for the continuous improvement of transport (air, maritime and land) and of communications, as well as the continuous upgrading of the quality of projects implemented by the Ministry. In addition, the better promotion and exploitation of archaeological wealth as well as other resources of the country is pursued.

The [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) which aims to maintain good relations with other countries, to have an active involvement in processes that aim to promote international co-operation, peace, stability and sustainable development.

The [Ministry of Defence](#) which is responsible for putting into effect Government Policy regarding the security and territorial integrity of Cyprus. In the framework of this policy, the Ministry of Defence has promoted and is promoting a series of measures which aim at strengthening the defence forces and the capability of the Republic to thwart any foreign threat and at the same time boost our negotiating ability. With consistency and high feeling of responsibility, the Ministry of Defence promotes the application of this policy.

Apart from these, the following institutions are involved:

The [Cyprus Sports Organization](#) which is under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture and takes care of sports in the country.

The [Theatrical Organization](#) which is again under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture and is responsible for the theatre in the country

The [Deputy Ministry of Tourism](#) which is the institution responsible for the tourism in the country.

The [Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development](#) which is responsible for handling issues related to:

(a) the European Funds and Programmes, such as the European Investment and Structural Funds, the EU Competitive Programmes and the grants provided by the countries of the European Economic Area and Switzerland.

(b) development and horizontal issues, such as Research, Technological Development and Innovation, Lifelong Learning, Corporate Social Responsibility and the 'Europe 2020' Strategy.

The [Commissioner for Children's Rights](#) whose mission is to protect and promote the rights of the child. Her role is to represent children and their interest at all levels, to promote public awareness and sensitivity so that children's rights in the family, at school, in the community are safeguarded and to identify and promote the views of children where they

themselves cannot be heard, to monitor legislation relating to children and to submit proposals aiming at their harmonization with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to carry out public awareness campaigns, to appoint a representative of the child in judicial proceedings affecting him/her and to represent children in procedures affecting them.

The [Commissioner for Volunteering and Non-Governmental Organizations](#) who implement policies to encourage active citizenship for active participation at all levels.

The [Commissioner to the Presidency for Humanitarian Affairs and Overseas Affairs](#) who is responsible for Cypriots living abroad or in the occupied part of the country, missing people and religious minorities.

The [Commissioner for Environment](#) whose role is to propose suggestions and put in place policies for the environment.

The [Cyprus Agricultural Payments Organization](#) whose main responsibility is the payment and the management of funds, which Cyprus is entitled to for the agricultural sector, after its entry to the European Union, as well as the management of all other aid granted from national funds to support farming and rural areas.

The [Human Resource Development Authority](#) which aims at creating the prerequisites for planned and systematic training and development of the human resources of Cyprus at all levels and in all areas to meet the needs of the economy within the framework of the social and economic policy of the state.

The [Cyprus National Addictions Authority](#) which is the responsible coordinating body of Cyprus in the field of legal and illegal use of substances and gambling.

The [Union of Cyprus Municipalities](#) which is the main association of Local Authorities in Cyprus. Its core functions are to contribute to the development of local government autonomy, as well as to act as spokesman of local government interests vis-a-vis the central government and other national institutions. It also takes an active stand in the relations between Cyprus and the European Union.

The [Union of Cyprus Communities](#) whose aims are:

1. The defence and promotion of members' powers, interests, rights and privileges and, generally, of the independence and self-sufficiency of the Local Authorities.
2. The permanent, and on an organised basis, cooperation and exchange of views between them, for the achievement of common targets.
3. The collection of data and information being useful for the cooperation of the Communities.
4. The expression of opinions to any Authority, Body, Organism or person (including the Government and the House of Representatives) and claiming from state matters aiming at the development and expansion of the Local Self-Government institution.
5. The participation in International Organs of Local Self-Government and its representation at Local and International Congresses.

The [Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes](#) whose mission is to manage the funds allocated to Cyprus by the European Commission, to promote the targets and policies of the European Union in the fields of Education and Vocational Training, and also to promote the targets and policies of the Republic of Cyprus in the same fields.

Main Themes

The themes addressed by the National Youth Strategy were chosen based on the themes addressed by the EU Youth Strategy as described above.

In order to gain adequate understanding of the actual needs of young people, the Youth Board of Cyprus has commissioned research on [the current situation of young people in](#)

Cyprus (available only in Greek). The research was conducted in 2015 and covers the 8 themes of the National and EU Youth Strategy. Additionally, the Youth Board of Cyprus, when preparing the National Youth Strategy has gathered additional data about the situation of young people in Cyprus from [the Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus](#), [Eurostat](#) and the European Youth Report.

As in the National Youth Strategy, the target group addressed by youth policy in Cyprus is young people aged between 14-35 years old. Youth policy does not identify any specific target groups within the youth population, although some policy priorities (included in the area of Social Inclusion) target mainly young people with fewer opportunities.

The National Agency for Youth

The **Youth Board of Cyprus** is the government's agency established to address youth issues. The Youth Board of Cyprus is a semi-governmental organisation under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth. It was established as a Legal Entity of Public Law in 1994. According to the [Youth Board Law](#), the administrative board of the Youth Board of Cyprus shall advise, through the Minister of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, the Council of Ministers about the configuration of a comprehensive and specialized policy on youth matters, which should promote the following aims of the Board:

- a. The progress and welfare of all young people of Cyprus, regardless of nationality or religion;
- b. The provision of equal opportunities to all young people and youth organizations for the participation and the assumption of responsibility in the social, economic and cultural development and progress of their community and the country in general
- c. The engagement and recreation of young people of Cyprus
- d. The immediate and effective confrontation of the problems of the young people.

Moreover, the administrative board of the Youth Board of Cyprus shall (among other aims):

- a. Study, work out and suggest to the Council of Ministers a unified policy or specialized projects regarding youth matters;
- b. Undertake the implementation of programmes regarding youth upon the approval of the Council of Ministers
- c. Be informed on youth matters by the competent services of the Ministries concerned and set out to the government its views in relation to these matters
- d. Participate in international youth organizations' meetings and develop bilateral contacts with respective youth bodies of other countries in order to be informed regarding the international development youth matters;
- e. Stipulate protocols/programmes of cooperation with corresponding youth bodies of other countries for the achievement of the Board's aims
- f. Suggest, in consultation with other state agencies, the conduction of scientific studies concerning the needs of young people and measures for their fulfilment.

The Minister of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth has the authority:

- a. To issue and provide the Administrative Board of the Youth Board of Cyprus with directives, general in nature, regarding the exercising of its functions, that are necessary for the general interest of the Republic of Cyprus;
- b. To ask the Administrative Board to submit reports, accounts and any other information relative to the Youth Board's assets and activities. By virtue of this paragraph, the Administrative Board is obliged to provide the Minister of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth anything he asks for, as well as the relevant books, documents and any other facility necessary for their check.
- c. The Minister shall be the contact person between the Administrative Board and the Council of Ministers and any document intended for the Council of Ministers shall be submitted for this purpose to the Minister.

There are no established lines of accountability and institutional processes to monitor the capacity of the Youth Board of Cyprus to exert its roles do not exist. The only relevant existing monitoring is related to the financial aspects. According to the Youth Board Law, the Administrative Board shall prepare in the form of a bill the Youth Board's budget, which shall be subject to the approval of the Council of Ministers and shall be laid before the House of Representatives to be voted as a law. The manner of preparation of the budget shall be determined by the Minister of Finance. The Youth Board shall keep suitable books and accounts as defined by the Minister of Finance. For the financial management of each year, a report shall be prepared as defined by the Minister of Finance.

The budget of the Youth Board of Cyprus is published in [Cyprus Government Gazette](#) (page 845). The real expenses of the Youth Board for 2017 were 5.744.765,00 euros while the approved budget for 2018 was 11.313.920,00 euros and the budget for 2019 is 11.093.381,00 euros showcasing a significant increase. Moreover, according to the [Council of Minister's decisions on the 16th November 2018](#), the Youth Board of Cyprus was given 400.000,00 euros as additional budget for 2018. The functions of the Youth Board of Cyprus remained the same, however its actions have been enriched and reinforced.

Policy monitoring and evaluation

The Youth Board of Cyprus recognized the need for setting up a monitoring mechanism for the National Youth Strategy. This mechanism aims at ensuring the policy monitoring and evaluation. It is based on cross-sectoral cooperation which includes all partners mentioned in the section 1.4 '[Structure of the decision-making](#)' and the Cyprus Youth Council. The Youth Board of Cyprus is coordinating this mechanism.

Two 3-year Action Plans were planned to be formed for the implementation of the NYS (2017-2019 and 2020-2022). The Action Plans consist of the specific actions, as well as the budget, and provide a detailed outline of the NYS implementation mechanism, in order for the targets and priorities that have been set to be achieved within six years. The Action Plans identify also the necessary indicators that will measure the impact of the Strategy.

The monitoring of the policy takes place through progress reports and consultations with young people. All government actors involved in the Strategy prepared a progress report regarding the implementation results of the first Action Plan. In addition to that, the Youth Board of Cyprus, organized in total 9 consultations with young people living in urban and rural areas with an aim to evaluate the first Action Plan, provide feedback and suggest new programmes or modifications to the existing ones so that they can be included in the second Action Plan. The main results of the mid-term progress report and the consultations are not shared publicly, but they have been used for the development of the second Action Plan of the Youth Strategy 2020-2022.

At the same time, in the end of each Action Plan a more comprehensive evaluation will take place. The current purpose is to prepare and submit a new Action Plan (2020-2022) and a mid-term Progress Report to the Council of Ministers and any suggestions for necessary revisions and improvements.

1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

Mechanisms and actors

As stated in the [Youth Board Law](#), "the Administrative Board of the Youth Board of Cyprus shall advise, through the Minister of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth the Council of Ministers about the configuration of a comprehensive and specialized policy on youth matters". Given this, the Youth Board Law is the main authority responsible for shaping youth policy. In case other stakeholders intent to initiate a youth policy, the Youth Board of Cyprus shall "be informed on youth matters by the competent services of the Ministries concerned and set out to the government its views in relation to these matters". In this way, as stated by the law, the ministries should consult with the Youth Board of Cyprus

when preparing any youth policy. Thus, the youth policy is developed and implemented according to a cross-sectoral approach.

However, one can say that so far this cross-sectoral approach happened more ad hoc. After introducing the National Youth Strategy, a more specific political commitment underpins the [cross-sectoral practice in the youth policy field](#).

When it comes to the National Youth Strategy, a cross-sectoral youth working group has been established. This cross-sectoral working group includes representatives from the Youth Board of Cyprus, the Ministries, Semi-governmental Organizations, and the Commissioners. While the Administrative Board has the leading role in the management of the National Youth Strategy, this cross-sectoral group basically coordinates its development and ensures a cross-sectoral approach.

1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

In Cyprus, there is an explicit commitment on the part of the top-level authorities to support youth policies with knowledge and evidence from research on youth.

The first explicit commitment derives from the [Youth Board Law](#) which enables the Board to suggest, in consultation with other state agencies, the conduction of scientific studies concerning the needs of young people and measures for their fulfilment.

The second commitment derives from the Youth Board's annual budget in which the budget for research became more than 3 times bigger since 2014. More specifically, the budget for research in 2014 was 8.330,00 euros ([proypologismos_onek_20141516_selida_35.pdf](#)) while in 2019 the budget is 30.000,00 euros as stated in the [National Gazette](#) (page 855). The allocation of funds here underlines the commitment of the Youth Board of Cyprus to research in the youth field. Moreover, after re-structuring the Youth Board, a new department has been initiated, which is dedicated to the Youth Strategy, Research and Cooperation.

Lastly, the National Youth Strategy again clarifies the commitment for an evidence-based youth policy. One of the principles of the Strategy is "evidence-based. More specifically, the Strategy outlines that one of the key elements in its implementation is that it is necessary to collect and analyse information in order to continually improve the situation of young people and thus the development of effective policies. Additionally, the mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the National Youth Strategy clearly defines the commitment for an evidence-based evaluation of the strategy, mid-term, final and annual, so that accurate data is collected and the implemented programs are adjusted based on this.

Cooperation between policy-making and research

There is institutionalized and regular cooperation with providers of research on youth. Based on the Youth Board law and the Youth Board's budget, the Youth Board has the authority to proceed to research by commissioning the research community. The Youth Board assigns and pays the research centres for conducting surveys based on the themes of the National Youth Strategy.

The first example of such cooperation is when the Youth Board of Cyprus commissioned KPMG for a research on [the current situation of young people in Cyprus](#) (available only in Greek) as described above. The aim of this research was to gather data concerning the current situation of young people in order to act as the basis of the National Youth Strategy. The research briefs illustrate key findings for the young people in regard to the 8 themes of the National (and the EU) Youth Strategy. The research was quantitative and data was collected through questionnaires. In total 1,340 young people took part in the research, 80% of whom filled in the hard-copy questionnaire and 20% the online version.

A second example of this cooperation is research which the Youth Board of Cyprus commissioned of the IMR of the University of Nicosia about [Active Youth Participation in social and democratic life](#). The aim of this research was to record the impact of the current political environment on young people. Its ultimate goal was to map and highlight the attitudes and beliefs of young people with regard to their intention to participate in elections and the criteria based on which they choose to participate. The research sample was 1000 young people aged between 18-35 years living in Cyprus.

The research on Active Youth Participation in social and democratic life indicated an emerging issue which calls for future policy action. More specifically, the key finding of the research was that young people who say they are happy with their lives are more active citizens and participate in different forms of social and democratic life.

So far, there is no evidence-based evaluation of youth policies.

National Statistics and available data source

The agency responsible for national statistics is the [Statistical Service of Cyprus \(CYSTAT\)](#). The aim of CYSTAT is to provide reliable and up-to-date statistical information. It is the competent authority responsible for the compilation and publication of most of the official statistical data in Cyprus. The statistics produced by CYSTAT concern all social and economic activities of the country. The sources of information are both the public and the private sector. Data from the private sector is collected mainly through surveys whereas from Government Departments and semi-Government organizations mostly through access to administrative records.

CYSTAT conducts censuses (complete enumerations), sample surveys and ad-hoc surveys. The data is collected mainly through personal interviews. At the planning stage of the various surveys, CYSTAT takes into consideration requests and proposals from other Government Departments so that their needs are fulfilled.

The Statistical Service collects data on various areas, some of which are irrelevant to young people. The key areas that are the subject of data collection and are relevant to youth are Population, Population Census, Health, Education, Living Conditions and Social Protection, Crime, Employment and Unemployment.

Until now, there has not been any national youth report. Also, there are no other sources of data and analysis on the situation of young people at national level.

Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field

The government has a line of funding for research on youth explicitly supporting evidence-based youth policymaking. This is done by allocating special funds for research in the budget of the Youth Board of Cyprus. In particular, the budget for Research Programmes in 2014 was 8 330 euros [proypologismos_onek_20141516_selida_35.pdf](#), while in 2015, 2016 and 2017 the budget was 40 000 euros respectively as seen in the [Cyprus Government Gazette](#). For 2018, as illustrated in the [National Gazette](#) (page 735) the approved budget for research programmes has been approved for 35 000 euros while for 2019 it was 30 000.

This budget increase, together with the inauguration of the new department "Youth Strategy, Research and Cooperation" within the Youth Board of Cyprus indicates the commitment of the government for supporting the evidence-based youth policy.

The government has not yet allocated funds for the evidence-based evaluation of its activities and policies.

1.7 Funding youth policy

How Youth policy is funded

There is no specific budget for youth policy at the Youth Board of Cyprus. The costs for the youth policy initiatives are funded ad hoc from other budgets. More specifically, the Action Plan of the National Youth Strategy includes only actions taken by the top-level authorities, such as the ministries and the commissioners.

What is funded?

The policy priorities receiving funds are the 8 areas included in the National Youth Strategy and they can be found under the chapter "[Scope and contents](#)".

Financial accountability

Not applicable.

Use of EU Funds

According to the [Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development](#), the European Structural Funds, the Development and Cohesion Fund have been used for the youth policy at top-level. The main programmes funded are the [National Action Plan for Youth Unemployment](#) (which includes also the Youth Guarantee Scheme) and the [Youth Entrepreneurship Enhancement Plan](#).

There is no available data on the amount of funding earmarked for youth from those EU funds.

There are also no existing evaluations of the youth related programmes receiving EU funds, nor trends in the amount or in the type of activities supported through EU funds.

1.8 Cross-border cooperation

Cooperation with European countries

Cyprus has activities of policy-coordination in the youth field with Czech Republic. More specifically, Cyprus used the 'Bilateral support measure' offered by the Council of Europe and had a peer coaching session with the Czech Republic. The Bilateral Support Measures are activities specifically tailored to the needs and requests for support in the area of youth policy by (mostly governmental) actors of the youth sectors in individual states. They are offered to assist public institutions, especially governmental authorities with responsibility for youth issues, to address their youth policy tasks and challenges. On this spectrum, 2 keynote speakers with expertise on youth policy in Czech Republic (one representative from the governmental and one from the non-governmental sector) shared their experienced and coached representatives from the Youth Board of Cyprus and the members of the cross-sectoral mechanism of the National Youth Strategy in June 2017. More recently, in April 2018, a team including members of the Youth Board of Cyprus and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth implemented a study visit in Czech Republic in order to learn from each other and exchange best practices in the field of youth policy. Since that time, Cyprus and Czech Republic still maintain a close relationship when it comes to youth policy development.

International cooperation

The Youth Board of Cyprus maintains [important international relations](#) and cooperation. It is active at both European and national levels for the promotion of youth policy issues. Specifically, the organization participates in Experts Groups dealing with youth issues, such as the Youth Department of the Council of Europe and the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy.

Cyprus also participated in the first Global Forum on Youth Policies. Convened by the Office of the United Nations Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth (OSGEY), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe (COE), it was the largest UN hosted youth-focused event since the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in Lisbon in 1998. Joining delegates from 165 countries, 115 governments, and more than 70 Ministers or Deputy Ministers, it resulted as the biggest conference exclusively on youth policies ever held. As written in an [online newspaper](#), the Youth Board of Cyprus was represented at the Forum by a member of the governing board of the organization.

1.9 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

The Youth Board of Cyprus, in its [announcement](#) on 14th June 2019, informed the wider audience that is in the process of development of the Youth Policy Institute. The Institute will carry out a scientific research and studies on youth issues, supporting thus the work of the Youth Board of Cyprus, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth and the government in general. In addition, it will offer ongoing scientific and technical support for policy planning on youth issues.

Ongoing debates

There are no ongoing debates currently taking place in the country.

2. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

The Office of the [Commissioner for Volunteerism and Non-Governmental Organizations](#) is the main actor involved in policy-making and the main governmental authority responsible for volunteering in the country. Although there is not a youth volunteering policy in the country, the field is scattered through the [National Youth Strategy](#) and other official documents produced by the Office of the Commissioner for Volunteerism and Non-Governmental Organizations.

At the moment, a lot of reforms take place, pushing forward new laws concerning voluntary organizations and mechanisms for validating the competences gained through volunteering

2.1 General context

Historical developments

Based on the [Cyprus report on volunteering across Europe](#), voluntary activities in Cyprus until the 19th century were rooted in initiatives of philanthropy, mostly by providing relief to the ones in need and by making altruistic expressions of kindness, love and “helping one another” especially in periods of hardship, destitution and deprivation. At that time, philanthropy and charity were acts exercised by the individual, the State and the Church.

In the 20th century, the British administration gives municipalities the responsibility to provide relief to the poor and the destitute and to run Relief Committees in order to allocate cash allowances. Voluntary activity is furthermore initiated to collect funds for the support of school infrastructures and to establish charity associations. Also during that time, an important social legislation is enacted (i.e. the Charities Law, based on the Charity Law of England and Wales and the Clubs (Registration) Law of 1930) and other major improvements are recorded towards the establishment and development of voluntary initiatives and organisations to address various needs.

The activity of organisations expanded including, amongst others, the mental health domain, the children with physical disabilities, the disabled, special education schools, family planning, prevention of crime and treatment of offenders, elderly care, general social and health services, etc. In 1963, the Community Welfare Council of the Nicosia district was established, with the task to act as a coordinating volunteer body. In 1968, the introduction of a Grants-in-Aid Scheme for voluntary organisations operated by the Department of Social Welfare enables the expansion or the introduction of programmes run by voluntary organisations. During these years, there was an official acknowledgement that the engagement of people as volunteers can bring not only an added value to community development, but can effectively address the needs of the communities, support social welfare, represent the interests of vulnerable groups and bring change in governmental policies.

Currently, Cyprus experiences a further expansion of programmes and activities run by volunteer-involving organisations, in more policy fields and ways of engagement. The activities of organisations cover the fields of social inclusion and welfare, environment, culture, human-aid, peace building, human rights, equal opportunities, development, sports, education, community development, empowerment of the social capital, the UN Millennium Development Goals, etc. The government of Cyprus, acknowledging the importance of volunteering, has enacted the [Office of the Commissioner for Volunteerism and Non-Governmental Organizations](#). The youth volunteering emerges as an essential aspect in the lives of young people and is promoted by the public sector in schools, and by NGOs in extra-curriculum time.

Main concepts

There is no national definition for volunteering. However, the [Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities of the Volunteer](#), initiated by the Cyprus Commissioner and approved by Council of Ministers includes two relevant definitions. First is the definition of a “voluntary activity”. A voluntary activity is carried out by volunteers. The activity is done for a non-profit purpose aiming at improving the society and not replacing paid/salaried staff. The voluntary activity can be carried out by voluntary organizations or on the initiative of a volunteer.

A second definition found in the Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities of the Volunteer is the one of the “volunteer”. Volunteer is a citizen who, having free will, carries out activities for the benefit of the society. These activities are conducted without a motive of making profit/on a non-profit-making basis, contribute to the personal development of the volunteer, who devotes his/her time and energy to the general good without financial reward/remuneration.

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

The [Office of the Commissioner for Volunteerism and Non-Governmental Organizations](#) is the main actor involved in policy-making and the main governmental authority responsible for youth volunteering. On 29 May 2013, the President of the Republic of Cyprus appointed the Commissioner by assigning him duties and responsibilities in order to achieve the best regulation for the support and upgrading of the Volunteering Movement. His role is to:

1. Implement policies that encourage active citizenship at all levels;
2. Create tools, such as public consultation working groups, questionnaires, online discussions and surveys to strengthen and facilitate a better contact between government and citizens;
3. Coordinate all voluntary organizations, Local Authorities and Church;
4. Support and upgrade the work of Voluntary Organizations and NGOs, with respect to their autonomy and independence;
5. Make good use of the European Programs in order to raise funds;
6. Work for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning on the basis of the Volunteer Legislative Framework, which will also contribute to combat unemployment.

According to the [Annual Report 2017-2018](#) the main public actors involved in the development of policies in the field of youth are:

- Youth Board of Cyprus runs the National Youth Strategy, in the preparation of which the Office of the Commissioner is actively involved.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, together with the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance cooperate with the Office of the Commissioner in order to develop the [National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography](#).
- The Ministries of Interior, Justice and Public Order, Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment cooperate with the Office of the Commissioner in order to manage volunteers during disasters and/or emergencies.
- The Ministry of Justice and Public Order and the Cyprus Police (Crime Combating Department) are responsible for the “[Neighborhood Watch](#)” Scheme aiming at encouraging citizens to participate on a voluntary basis so as to prevent and reduce crime.
- The Ministry of Interior runs a Committee of the National Programme of Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020 in which the Commissioner is takes part.

In addition, the promotion of volunteerism takes place in consultation with non-public actors such as the local NGOs. One of the main non-public actors is the Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council (PVCC).

The PVCC was founded in 1973, when there was a need for coordination amongst the voluntary organizations, development of policy for the voluntary sector and social policy consultation with the voluntary sector and cooperation with governmental authorities.

Recognizing the vital role of the Council, the State decided to provide a legal framework [the Pancyprian Welfare Council Law (152/89)] for its operation. In 2001 it was recognized that there was a need to further upgrade the legal framework of the Council in order to respond to its role and mission more effectively. In 2006, the House of Representatives passed a new legislation that governs “the establishment and function of the Pan Cyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council” (PVCC). Under the new legislation the Council has a new operational framework, new responsibilities and a broader role for the coordination and development of the voluntary sector and volunteerism in general. As stated in their official [website](#) “the dialogue between the PVCC and the State takes place at various levels, through meetings, participation of PVCC’s representatives in Committees and through PVCC’s activities that promote dialogue and cooperation with the state officials, the legislative and executive power”.

There is not a distribution of responsibilities between top-level and regional/local authorities.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

Cross-sectoral cooperation takes place in an organic way. Right now, there are not any mechanisms of structured cross-sectorial cooperation between Ministries, Departments, Agencies involved in defining policies and measures on youth volunteering.

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

Existence of a National Strategy

There is not a national Strategy on Youth Volunteering in Cyprus.

However, the National Youth Strategy (more information is included in the previous chapter) contains information on youth volunteering. The Strategy outlines the following priorities when it comes to youth volunteering:

- To institutionalize volunteering and to promote voluntary activities inside and outside school/university and/or work environment
- To educate young people about their obligations and rights as volunteers
- To promote modern forms of volunteering
- To establish minimum standards for issuing a certificate for volunteers
- To ensure that the rights of volunteers are not exploited
- To support voluntary and Non-Governmental Organizations
- To promote volunteering at national and transnational levels as a means of expressing solidarity

Also, the ‘[Declaration of rights and responsibilities of the volunteers](#)’ («Διακήρυξη των δικαιωμάτων και των υποχρεώσεων των εθελοντών») is an official document approved by the Council of Ministers that establishes a common basis for volunteering. It was introduced in 2016 by the Commissioner for Volunteering and Non-Governmental Organizations and is based on relevant declarations from the European Commission, the United Nations, and the Council of Europe. It targets volunteers in general and is not specific to young volunteers.

The Declaration outlines the rights of volunteers which are clustered as follows: (i) basic rights (ii) rights in receiving support from the voluntary organizations (iii) rights to personal development. It also covers the responsibilities of the volunteer and the responsibilities of the voluntary organizations which are clustered as below: (i) basic responsibilities (ii) responsibilities to support volunteers (iii) responsibilities towards the personal development of the volunteer and (iv) cooperation with other voluntary organizations.

Although approved by the Council of Ministers, the Declaration does not function as a binding document for all volunteers, voluntary activities and organizations. Instead, it serves as a point of reference for the design and upgrading of policies related to volunteering, in terms of safeguarding the rights and obligations of volunteers.

Scope and contents

Not applicable

Responsible authority

Not applicable

Revisions/ Updates

Not applicable

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

National Programme for Youth Volunteering

A National Programme for youth volunteering does not exist in Cyprus. However, the Office of the Commissioner of Volunteerism and NGOs has recently launched a new website under the name prosfero.com. The new website is used as a platform in which people can register in order to volunteer in different NGOs.

Funding

Not applicable.

Characteristics of youth volunteering

There is very limited research on youth volunteering in Cyprus. The two most recent studies with official statistics related to volunteerism were conducted by the Youth Board of Cyprus and the Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT) respectively.

The first report, '[The current situation of young people in Cyprus](#)', was assigned to KPMG on behalf of the Cyprus Youth Board (publication date: November 2015). Based on this research, most of the young people between 14-35 years old who answered the questionnaire (55%) were not involved in voluntary activities in the last year. From those who had been involved in voluntary activities, the majority were involved in voluntary activities at a local level.

The [second study](#), also conducted in 2015 by the CYSTAT in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner for Volunteering and Non-Governmental Organizations, did not focus exclusively on youth volunteerism but rather on volunteerism and active citizenship in the general population of Cyprus. The results showed that only 7.17% had participated in volunteer work through an organization or organized group, and 2.63% in voluntary work on their own initiative.

From those who volunteered in an organization, 21.78% were aged 16 and 29 years old and 24.35% 30 and 39 years old. The main fields of activities took place in Parent Associations, Community and Municipal Councils, Ecclesiastical Committees, Sports Associations and Youth Centres, at fundraising events, charity and other events which aimed to collect money, food and clothing to support deprived people. Participants also

volunteered in blood donations and initiatives related to the cleanliness of parks, beaches, coasts, municipalities and schools.

From those who volunteered on their own initiative, 24% were aged between 16 and 29 years old and 20.29% between 30 and 39 years old. Voluntary activities included voluntary care for stray animals (mainly dogs), free work and/or services, such as repairing objects, and voluntary assistance to citizens who are ill or in need of transportation. In addition, they participated in voluntary activities aimed at collecting and/or distributing food and other basic commodities to homeless people, they provided (either directly or indirectly) financial support to other citizens and volunteered in initiatives for the cleanliness of parks, beaches, municipalities, schools and gardens. Lastly, the study mentions that it is encouraging that participation rates in volunteer activities, either collectively or individually, for the age groups 16-29 and 30-39 are among the highest.

Support to young volunteers

The 'Declaration of rights and responsibilities of the volunteers'" outlines what kind of support should be given to volunteers. Specifically, each volunteer is entitled to reimbursement of expenses incurred during the implementation of the voluntary activity (only costs related to the activity). It should be noted, though, that the decision to provide such reimbursement for their volunteers or not is up to the organisation. In addition, the voluntary organizations should provide insurance which covers social protection, medical care and civil liability.

Quality Assurance

A system of quality assurance of the programmes and schemes of youth volunteering does not exist in Cyprus.

Target groups

Given the fact that there is not a national Programme for Youth Volunteering, there are not any target groups specified.

2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes

EU programmes

Cyprus currently participates in the [European Solidarity Corps \(ESC\)](#) and the [EU Aid Volunteers programme](#). Cyprus previously participated in the European Voluntary Service of the Erasmus+ Programme (EVS), some of its projects might still run.

Regarding the ESC, the main top-level authority in charge of organizing and monitoring it is at national level is the Youth Board of Cyprus. After contacting the person responsible for ESC, we gathered the necessary data for the ESC volunteers in Cyprus. The Youth Board of Cyprus monitors the participation of young people in ESC through the applications submitted to the National Agency of the E+ Youth Programme by the accredited organizations. Volunteers participating in the approved ESC projects attend two seminars organized by the National Agency: one on arrival training and one Mid-Term evaluation meeting. Through these seminars, the Youth Board comes in contact with volunteers, informs them of everything they need to know about their service and at the same time receives their own impressions, experiences and comments.

The number of EVS youth volunteers arriving in Cyprus in 2014 was 41, in 2015 it was 50 and in 2016 it was 73. For 2018 and 2019 combined, the number of European Solidarity Corps volunteers grew tremendously reaching around 350. The vast majority of volunteers came from different European countries.

In 2018 and 2019, 35 Cypriot volunteers participated in ESC voluntary projects abroad, as it is visible from the Cigna Insurance. They volunteer in Greece, Italy, Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Austria, Finland and Bulgaria.

In addition, as informed by the Youth Board of Cyprus, there are now 600 Cypriot youth registered on the on online platform.

Last, there is not information about the EU Aid Volunteers Programme in Cyprus.

Other Programmes

There are not bilateral or multilateral programmes for youth cross—border volunteering in Cyprus.

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

When it comes to ESC volunteers, the ESC Programme Guide, the ESC Info-kit and the Agreement signed between all parties involves sets the legal framework for young volunteers coming from abroad to do volunteering in Cyprus.

If a visa is required for youth ESC volunteers who will enter the Republic of Cyprus, the hosting organization needs to follow the ESC Programme Guide, as well as the [Aliens and Immigrants \(Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for Research, Studies, Internships, Voluntary Service, Student Exchanges or Educational Programs\) Law of 2019 \(Law 7 \(I\) / 2019\)](#).

Non-European ESC volunteers who will stay for a maximum period of up to 12 months are granted a residence permit for all the duration of their service.

2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

Information providers

The public body responsible for disseminating information on volunteering opportunities for young people is the Youth Board of Cyprus. Young people can get information about volunteering (mainly EVS) by visiting directly the Youth Board Office, or the [Youth information Centres](#) which also manage the [Eurodesk Cyprus](#). Young people may also get information online from the websites of the Youth Board and the newsletters of Youth Information Centres and Eurodesk.

Key initiatives

As mentioned in the [annual report 2017-2018](#) of the Office of the Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGOs, the top-level initiatives taken to disseminate information on volunteering among young people include (a) talks at radio and tv shows, (b) campaigns organized by the Office of the Commissioner and (c) information provided through the website of the Office, as well as the social media.

2.7 Skills recognition

Policy Framework

There are currently not any national criteria for recognizing skills acquired through volunteering. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth is in the process of developing a [mechanism for validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning](#) (including volunteering).

Existing arrangements

Not applicable.

2.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

As mentioned in the [National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020](#), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth is in the process of developing a mechanism for validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning (including volunteering).

Last, in an interview, the Commissioner informed us that it has been decided together with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth the creation of a booklet or platform of “good practices”. This will include tangible results of the actions carried out in schools when it comes to volunteering. Furthermore, a specific label “License C” will be placed in schools whose students have excelled in voluntary initiatives.

Ongoing debates

There are not any ongoing debates concerning the field.

3. EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A strategy dedicated on youth employment indicates the interest of the government for the employability of young people. The [National Action Plan for Youth Employment](#) endorses a wide range of actions that aim to reinforce youth employment. A cross-sectoral approach is a key element of the Action Plan, addressing collectively the high level of youth unemployment in the country. Special attention is also given to the empowerment of youth entrepreneurship in the country through various grant schemes.

A highlight of youth employment policy is the integration of the outcomes of skills forecasting in the schemes of traineeship and apprenticeship and the opportunities given through cross-boarder mobility.

3.1 General context

Labour market situation in the country

As mentioned in the [National Reform Plan 2019](#), Cyprus is on economic recovery. The labour market has significantly improved, even though there is still slack in the economy. In particular, the employment in persons increased by 5.6% (21.255 persons) in 2018 while the employment rate went up to 73,9% compared to 70,8% in 2017. The unemployment rate fell to 8,4% in 2018 compared to 11,1% in 2017. These employment developments resulted also in a decrease of part time and temporary employment for both sexes with the total part time employment falling to 11,6% in 2018 compared to 13,0% in 2017 and the total temporary employment falling to 13,7% compared to 15,2% in 2017. Young people (15-24) increased their employment by 13,3% (or 3.555 persons) in 2018, compared to 2017. Young people (15-24) have also experienced a great drop in the unemployment rate (from 24,7% in 2017 to 20,2% in 2018). The number of long-term unemployed decreased considerably by 39,3% (or 7.530 persons) in 2018 resulting in the very low level of the longterm unemployment ratio of 2.7%, from 4.5% in 2017. Despite the declining trend of the youth unemployment rate, the proportion of young people not in employment nor in education or training (NEET) still remains high at the level of 11,1% in 2018 Q3. Registered unemployment continued its declining trend in 2018 with the monthly average number of registered unemployed in 2018 exhibiting a decrease of 21% (or 6.915 persons) reaching the level of 26.766 persons. As far as labour demand is concerned, the number of job posts notified with the Public Employment Services in 2018 (23,457 job posts) indicated an increase of 6% compared to the jobs notified in 2017 (22,180 job posts).

In October 2019, as announced on the official website of the [Statistical Service of Cyprus](#), there were 7,491 registered unemployed people. In particular, there were 32 unemployed under 20 years old, 344 unemployed between 20-24 years old, 806 unemployed aged between 25-29 years old and 1,857 unemployed aged between 30-39 years old. This indicates that young people represent a significant part of the unemployed population in the country.

Main concepts

In Cyprus, every young person from the age of 14 has the right to work, as defined by the [Law on the Protection of Young Persons in the Employment](#). However, some young people still find it hard to get a job, especially young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). After the financial crisis, Cyprus continues its efforts to tackle unemployment and modernise and enhance its Public Employment Services through the strengthening of its human and technical capacity and also exploring the potential to improve efficiency in service provision, the performance of PES as well as reinforcing outreach and activation support for young people who are NEETs. At the same time, a

significant effort to encourage young people engage in entrepreneurship is put by government.

3.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The main governmental authority responsible for youth employment and entrepreneurship is [the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#) and particularly, the Department of Labour. The mission of the Ministry (among others) is the maintenance and continuous improvement of the standard of living and the quality of life of the working population and of the society in general. The Department of Labour is responsible for:

- The employment and the labour market;
- Combating discrimination and promoting the principle of equality in the workplace.

Moreover, the Department is responsible for providing employment services and filling vacancies, protecting special groups in employment, monitoring the function of the labour market and coordinating the National Employment Policy.

According to the National Action Plan for Youth Employment, together with the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, the following public actors are involved in policy making in this field:

- the Youth Board of Cyprus, as explained in detail in chapter 1;
- the Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry: It is responsible for the formulation and implementation of Government policy on matters pertaining to energy, trade, industry, competitiveness and consumers, in such a way that it will contribute positively towards the further development of the Cyprus economy and the well-being of the population of the island. The administration of the Ministry handles the general policy and directs and co-ordinates all the departments and services of the Ministry for its effective implementation;
- the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth;
- the [Human Resource Development Authority](#): the mission of the Human Resource Development Authority is to create the prerequisites for planned and systematic training and development of the human resources of Cyprus at all levels and in all sectors in order to meet the needs of the economy within the framework of the social and economic policy of the state;
- the [Cyprus Productivity Centre](#): The mission of Cyprus Productivity Centre is to assist private and public organizations to utilise their human and capital resources in the best possible way so as to increase productivity.

As non-public actors, the State and Private Universities – operating in the Government controlled area of the Republic of Cyprus – are also involved in policy-making in this field.

There is no distribution of responsibilities between top-level and regional/local authorities regarding the main governance approach to youth employment and entrepreneurship. All responsibilities are held on the top-governmental level.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

As stated in the National Action Plan for Youth Employment, a result-based management system is established by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance to regularly assess the quality of service delivery and the outcomes achieved by labour market policies. This system:

- (i) identifies in measurable terms the results being sought and a roadmap for their achievement;

- (ii) sets targets and indicators (to judge performance);
- (iii) develops a method for the regular collection of data to compare the results achieved against the targets;
- (iv) integrates evaluations to gather information not available through monitoring; and
- (v) uses monitoring and evaluation information for decision-making, accountability and strategic planning.

Monitoring and evaluation is overseen by the Working Group which was established for the development of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment. This working group includes representatives from all implementing bodies, social partners and youth organisations.

3.3 Skills forecasting

Forecasting system(s)

The [Human Resource Development Authority](#) (HRDA) is the responsible authority for identifying future demands in the labour market. It implements a 10-year employment forecasts on a regular basis. The forecasts aim to contribute substantially to the planning and implementation of education and training activities through the provision of employment needs forecasts in the Cyprus economy. In 2017, the HRDA released another study under the name "[Forecasts of employment needs in the Cyprus economy 2017-2027](#)". The study provides forecasts for employment needs in economic sectors (3 broad sectors, 21 main sectors and 52 sectors) and in 309 occupations (173 high level occupations, 130 middle level occupations and 6 low level occupations) covering the whole spectrum of the Cyprus labour market for the period 2017-2027. In addition, in March 2018 the HRDA published a study named "[Identification of green skills in the Cyprus Economy 2017-2027](#)". This study provides forecasts for employment and demand for labor in the economic sectors and occupations with participation in the green economy for the period 2017-2027. Additionally, it identifies the green skill needs for specific occupations of the green economy of Cyprus.

The main output of these forecasts are extended reports which are published on the website of the HRDA. Furthermore, the HRDA participates actively in initiatives and actions that are promoted at European level in the framework of the European network [Skillsnet](#) for skill needs forecasting.

The [Ministry of Finance](#) provides projections for the growth of the economy, which include forecasts of value added, productivity and employment, and submits proposals for the required policy changes.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth and more specifically the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE) is responsible for the introduction, with the participation of the social partners, of new fields of study and specialisations, the design of curricula and the identification of special skills needed.

To carry out these tasks, while considering the developmental needs of the Cyprus economy and the latest scientific and technological advances, the Department of STVE has developed close cooperation with all major stakeholders such as Ministries, the [Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development](#), the social partners (employers' and employees' organisations), teachers and their associations, the [University of Cyprus](#) (UCY), the [Cyprus University of Technology](#), the [Pedagogical Institute](#) (PI) and the HRDA. The findings of the research studies of the HRDA are also taken into account for the design of curricula.

In addition, the [Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation](#) (CERE) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth participates in the [Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies](#) (PIAAC), a survey recognised by [OECD](#) and delivered

by ETS. PIAAC assesses the level and distribution of adult skills in a coherent and consistent way across countries. It focuses on the key cognitive and workplace skills that are needed for successful participation in the economy and society of the 21st century.

Skills development

Skills anticipation outputs are used by policymakers to develop appropriate policies to support public and private organisations involved in human resource planning in adapting to the country's skill needs. Other key users of the results from the HRDA skills anticipation studies are public and private organisations, future graduates and their families, school counsellors, general education and VET institutions (universities, colleges, and public and private schools of all levels), employers, trade unions, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, and [Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#) (MLWSI).

More specifically, the outcomes of the HRDA forecast are used to support the acquisition of skills by young people in the following formal education programmes, as stated in the National Reform Plan 2018:

1. Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE). A review and reform of the fields of study and specialisations offered by Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE) has already been done in order to become more attractive and relevant to labour market needs.
2. Evening Technical Schools. The Evening Technical Schools are equivalent to the formal STVE programmes offered in mainstream Technical Schools, adapted to the needs of adult students. Therefore, Evening Technical Schools operate as second chance schools, offering good quality mainstream VET education to adults who are early school leavers, so that they have the opportunity to re-enter the formal school system, obtain a qualification at upper secondary level, move on to tertiary education if they wish and/or re-enter the labour market as skilled workers.
3. The Post-Secondary Institutes of VET (PSIVET): The programmes offered by PSIVET are especially designed, after consultation with the social partners and stakeholders, to respond to the needs of emerging economic sectors and to be relevant to labour market needs.

The outcomes of the HRDA forecast are not yet used in the non-formal and informal learning field.

As described in the Skills Panorama, the outputs are disseminated in a number of ways:

- The HRDA organises press conferences for the presentation of its forecasts and other studies;
- Special lectures are organised for secondary school guidance counsellors in collaboration with the MoEC, and for employment counsellors in collaboration with the PES;
- Findings of the forecast studies are disseminated to the public through the media such as articles in newspapers and participation in relevant radio and television programmes;
- Detailed forecasts of employment demand for around 300 occupations are provided on the [HRDA website](#). Users may search for information on occupations of interest.

3.4 Career guidance and counselling

Career guidance and counselling services

The following career guidance and counselling services are offered by government:

1. The first type is offered by the Public Employment Services (PES) of the [Department of Labour](#) (Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance) to all unemployed people (including youth), providing information and guidance. The Public Employment Services of the Department of Labour operate at central and district level, with Labour Offices at the Districts of Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca and Pafos.

At the District Labour Offices, job seekers are assisted in finding suitable employment through registration and placement services, as well as through the provision of vocational guidance and counselling on training opportunities. The PES counsellors invite young people for providing support, guidance and assistance through individualised services, aiming at their return back into education or participating in active labour market policies to facilitate their entry into the labour market. This guidance service is independent of the Youth Guarantee's scheme.

2. The second type is a special career guidance offered by the PES to the youth aged between 15-29 years old. Registration with the PES will be the entry point for youth into the Guarantee. The registration requirement will allow the PES to collect the information necessary for planning service delivery, allocate resources, monitor individual progression and evaluate policy outcomes. At the low-intensity service stage, young individuals will be informed about the services available, what they may expect from the guarantee and the specific requirements that apply. This stage of assistance provides young people with labour market information, group counselling and job search training to enable them to search for work independently for a period of three months. If by the end of the assisted job search period the young beneficiary still has no concrete job prospects, she/he is referred to individualized counselling and guidance. This second tier of assistance will allow to: i) identify the specific barrier(s) faced by the young individual in entering the labour market (risk factors), and ii) select the most effective mix of services and programmes to lead to a job or back to education. The intervention strategy agreed upon by the casework and the young person will become the core feature of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP).

70% of the budget and the target to be allocated for the age group 15-24.

This is an integrated service delivery model is introduced for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

3. The **Career Counselling and Educational Services** (CCES) operate under the umbrella of the Secondary Education Administration of the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture. Their main aim is the personal, social, educational and vocational development of high school students and other people.

The CCES maintains Counselling and Career Guidance offices in all public Secondary and Technical schools as well as Central Career Guidance offices at the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Taking into consideration the individuality of each person, their abilities and their freedom of will, the CCES aims to help students and other people to:

- Develop positive self-esteem, self-approval and self-confidence.
- Identify their abilities, interests and skills.
- Use their unique capabilities and aptitudes to achieve self-awareness.
- Acquire the right skills to deal effectively with personal, family and/or social issues in life.
- Adjust to the school environment in order to progress both educationally and socially.
- Develop critical thinking.
- Develop the necessary skills that will allow use of appropriate information effectively and make well informed decisions concerning educational, vocational and personal choices.
- Learn about the nature and demands of various vocations as well as the current social, economic and cultural developments so that correct educational choices are made.

This guidance service is independent of the Youth Guarantee's scheme.

4. The [Career Counselling and Career Management Services](#) are offered by the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#). The services are provided to young people aged up to 35 years old, in order to help them to make the best possible educational and professional choices. The meetings take place at the Youth Information Centres in Nicosia, Larnaca, Paphos and Limassol. A new Youth Information Centre will soon open in Sotira and will provide the same services. The services provide:
 - Counselling Career Planning taking into consideration the circumstances of the recent labour market (new skills, enhancement of employability opportunities, CV, job searching methods, entrepreneurship initiative, information on European and national opportunities).
 - Information on education and training opportunities in Cyprus and abroad.
 - Guidance on lessons' choices for students attending Secondary Schools classes.
 - Help in filling the applications for access to public universities.

This guidance service is independent of the Youth Guarantee's scheme.

Funding

Below, the funding information of the career guidance and counselling services mentioned in the section [3.4 Career guidance and Counselling](#) are elaborated:

1. As illustrated in the [National Action Plan for Youth Employment](#), the budget for the 1st type of service as described above (as well as others under measures aiming for the objective "Enhance the Service Capacity of the PES and providing information and guidance to the youth") for the period 2015-2017 is 2.000.000 euros, the funding source of which is European Structural Funds. It is managed by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance.
2. As illustrated in the [National Action Plan for Youth Employment](#), the funding for the 2nd type of career guidance and counselling services (as described before) is the European Structural Funds. These are managed by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and is calculated at 500.000 euro.
3. Again, as illustrated in the [National Action Plan for Youth Employment](#), the budget for the 3rd service for the period 2015-2017 is 1.200.000 euros. It is managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and its source is the ESF.
4. The source of funding of the 4th type of service (Career Counselling and Career Management Services offered by the Youth Board) comes from the State's budget. The amount of funding is not available.

Quality assurance

There was no information found about any existing system of quality assurance of the services of career guidance and counselling in the country.

3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

There is no main top-level official guidelines concerning traineeships or apprenticeship in Cyprus.

Depending on the traineeship or apprenticeship scheme, the responsibilities of each party involved (providers and participants) are formulated. Few examples of traineeships or apprenticeship can be found below:

1. [Post-Graduate Vocational Education and Training Institutes](#)

- This traineeship offers opportunities for Cypriot citizens and especially young people to acquire, improve or upgrade their professional qualifications and skills to make them more capable of employment and participation in the labor market. The idea is to offer modern curricula that provide scientific, technical and professional knowledge and skills while being flexible and adaptable to the rapid changes in employment, the economy, the professions and the content of the professions. The programme aims to facilitate access to and integration into the labor market of graduates of secondary education and people with difficulties of integration / reintegration into employment.
- Social security is not covered by this scheme.

2. [Vocational Education and Training Apprenticeship System](#)

This Apprenticeship System aims to ensure that young people are employed and remain socially active as active citizens while meeting the needs of the labor market.

Its main objectives are:

- To offer alternative learning styles to adolescents who leave the formal education system and who need to develop specific skills or professional skills, taking the appropriate skills, either for further education in choices offered by the education system or for employment in the labor market.
 - To ensure mobility and flexibility in the choices of young people offered by the education system, apprenticeship and work, without dead ends and exclusions.
 - To improve the labor offer with young people who are adequate, qualified and certified professionals, ready to meet the needs of the economy.
- ### 3. [Providing Opportunities to New Law Graduates up to 29 years old](#) (offered by Cyprus Bar Association)

The project is open to new law graduates who have obtained a Certificate of Registration for a Practitioner and at the same time at the commencement stage of their training. They must be up to 29 years old and NEETs. The project aims to involve 1,200 practicing lawyers for the period 1 September 2017 - 31 December 2020.

This project is co-funded by the European Social Funds and the Youth Employment Initiative.

4. [Providing Opportunities to New Graduates of Architecture and Civil Engineering up to 29 who are NEET](#) (offered by Technical Chamber of Cyprus)

The project runs until 31 December 2021 and the aim is to offer traineeship of 1 year to 600 NEETs who are up to 29 years old and graduates of Architecture and Civil Engineering.

Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

The traineeships and apprenticeships are usually promoted through the career guidance and counselling services described in [section 3.4](#).

Apart from this, there are no other top-level policy measures or initiatives to facilitate the participation, support and awareness of young people about traineeships and apprenticeships.

Recognition of learning outcomes

When it comes to the [Post-Graduate Vocational Education and Training Institutes](#) and the [Vocational Education and Training Apprenticeship System](#), the skills young people acquired are formally recognised by Cyprus. As a result of their participation, they obtain a diploma or a certificate. So far, young people cannot validate the knowledge, skills and competences acquired in any other way since such mechanisms are not yet in place.

Funding

Both, the [Post-Graduate Vocational Education and Training Institutes](#) and the [Vocational Education and Training Apprenticeship System](#) are co-funded by the European Social Fund and the Republic of Cyprus. The amount of funding is not available.

The budget of the scheme "Providing Opportunities to New Law Graduates up to 29 years old" is € 12,000,000. 92% of the funds come from European Social Funds and the Youth Employment Initiative. 8% of the funds come from national sources.

The budget for the Scheme "Providing Opportunities to New Graduates of Architecture and Civil Engineering up to 29 who are NEET" (offered by Technical Chamber of Cyprus) is € 6,000,000. It is possible that the scheme will be co-funded by the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Funds.

Quality assurance

There are not any existing systems of quality assurance applied to schemes of traineeships and apprenticeships in the country. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth prepares annual [reports](#) which includes information on the Post-Graduate Vocational Education and Training Institutes and the Vocational Education and Training Apprenticeship System.

3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market

Youth employment measures

The main policy measures implemented at top-level to foster the access of young job-seekers to employment are offered by the Department of Labour of the [Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#) and the [Human Resource Development Authority](#) of Cyprus. They both offer various schemes to unemployed people of all ages who are facing particular barriers in finding and retaining jobs (low-skilled youth, social protection beneficiaries, unemployed at risk of long-term unemployment). Below is a list of available schemes offered:

1. [Provision of Incentives for the Employment of Unemployed Youth aged up to 25 years](#) (offered by the Department of Labour)

The Scheme includes the sponsorship of 50% or 60% of the wage costs for employers in the private sector for the recruitment of unemployed youths of all categories and those Not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET) who are registered in the Public Employment Service - PES). This scheme runs between 7/8/2017-1/1/2020 and its target is 700 beneficiaries.

This scheme is under the Youth Guarantee Scheme.

2. [Provision of Incentives for the Employment of People with Chronic Diseases](#) (offered by the Department of Labour)

The Scheme includes the sponsorship of employers in the private sector for the recruitment of unemployed persons with chronic diseases registered with the PES. The grant will be 75% of the wage cost up to a maximum of € 10,000. This scheme runs between 6/7/2017-1/1/2020 and its target is 800 beneficiaries.

This scheme is under the Cypriot Operational Programme "Employment, Human Resources and Social Cohesion" for the implementation of the European Structural Funds in the period 2014-2020.

3. [Provision of Incentives for the Employment of People with Disabilities](#) (offered by the Department of Labour)

The Scheme includes the sponsorship to employers in the private sector for the recruitment of unemployed persons with disabilities registered with the PES. The grant is

75% of the wage cost up to a maximum of € 20,000. This scheme runs between 6/7/2017-31/12/2020 and its target is 100 beneficiaries.

This scheme is under the Cypriot Operational Programme "Employment, Human Resources and Social Cohesion" for the implementation of the European Structural Funds in the period 2014-2020.

4. [Provision of Incentives for Hiring Recipients of Guaranteed Minimum \(GMI\) Income Combined with a three-month Training Period](#) (offered by the Department of Labour and the HRDA)

The Scheme includes the sponsorship of employers in the private sector for the recruitment of unemployed GMI recipients registered with PES. The unemployed persons first must attend and complete a training program for three (3) months and then continue working for the specific employer for 12 months. The grant is 60% of the wage cost up to a maximum of € 6,000. This scheme runs for 2017-2019 and its target is 850 beneficiaries.

5. [Scheme for the Employment and Training of Tertiary Education Graduates](#) (offered by HRDA)

The scheme aims at strengthening the management capacity of enterprises and organisations through the employment and training of qualified tertiary education graduates under 30 years of age, while helping the smooth integration of graduates into suitable job positions. Young unemployed tertiary education graduates are offered a training subsidy while they receive on the job training for 6 months. The HRDA sets the minimum gross wage of €950 per month paid by the employer to the graduate during the programme. The subsidy is calculated on the basis of the eligible costs of the implemented training programme. The scheme runs until 2021.

The main large-scale outreach strategy to disseminate information about job opportunities among young people in Cyprus is the '[ActiveYouth: Youth Guarantee to ACTIVate and Empower YOUTH in Cyprus: an integrated communications campaign](#)'. The main purpose of the programme is to raise awareness of the Youth Guarantee among young people as essential for reaching out to those not registered with their respective national Youth Guarantee systems, informing them that it is a pre-condition for them to contact relevant services and benefit from available offers. The project will be carried out by the Youth Information Centres of the Youth Board of Cyprus.

ActiveYouth is a complete communication strategy for national communications campaign aiming to activate NEETs and young people in general, guiding them to the Public Employment Services and enabling them to actively search for a job, training or internship opportunity, making the most of existing Youth Guarantee schemes. At the same time, ActiveYouth aims to promote synergies between key Youth Guarantee stakeholders in Cyprus, focusing on those who have the capacity to reach out to NEETs from diverse backgrounds (poverty, disability, low educational attainment or ethnic minority/migrants).

The ActiveYouth campaign adopts and builds upon the existing Youth Guarantee media toolkit entitled 'Youth Guarantee in 3 steps'. A list of complementary online and offline training and networking activities has been drawn, inspired from and based on best practices of other EU Member States. ActiveYouth is expected to increase the number of young people (15-24) registered with the Public Employment Services and thus support the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance Services of the Republic of Cyprus in the implementation of the National Action Plan.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

There are currently no top-level policies or measures to enhance flexibility and security in the labour market.

Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

The [Department of Labour](#) is responsible for the proper implementation and monitoring of the Equal Treatment of men and women in employment and vocational training. The implementation of the legislation and its improvement through the introduction of new laws, and the modification of the existing ones, aim at achieving equal treatment of men and women in the field of work. The recent amendment concerning the Protection of Maternity Law (116(I)/2017) to cover cases of surrogate maternity and the adoption of legislation on Paternity Protection (117(I)/2017) constitute measures and policies for the reconciliation of professional and family life.

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

Information about the funding of the schemes/initiatives described above ([Youth employment measures](#)):

1. The budget of the scheme "Provision of Incentives for the Employment of Unemployed Youth aged up to 25 years" is 4,000,000 euros. The scheme is co-funded by the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Funds.
2. The budget of the scheme "Provision of Incentives for the Employment of People with Chronic Diseases" is 450,000 euros. The scheme is financed by the European Social Funds and the Republic of Cyprus.
3. The budget of the scheme "Provision of Incentives for the Employment of People with Disabilities" is €1.200.000. The scheme is financed by the European Social Funds and the Republic of Cyprus.
4. The budget of the scheme "Provision of Incentives for Hiring Recipients of Guaranteed Minimum (GMI) Income Combined with a three-month Training Period" is 1,200,000 euros.
5. The budget for the scheme "[Scheme for the Employment and Training of Tertiary Education Graduates](#)" is not available. Its source is national funds.

Quality assurance

The HRDA ensures the quality of the programmes it subsidises by undertaking controls in the programme approval stage, the programme implementation stage and the payment of subsidy stage. The HRDA also carries out evaluation studies on the effectiveness and impact of its activities. To this end, a comprehensive system evaluating the impact of HRDA on the economy of Cyprus has been set up. Within this system, evaluation studies, which include field and desk research, are conducted by either independent consultants or the HRDA.

In addition, many employment schemes include vocational training. Regarding this, the training programmes are implemented by public and private institutions and enterprises. To be approved they need to adhere to the criteria laid down by the HRDA.

An important development with regard to training providers is the introduction of a system for the assessment and certification of training providers. Through this system, which has been fully implemented as of 1 January 2015, vocational training centres, vocational training facilities and trainers are assessed against specific criteria to ensure that they are eligible for certification. For trainers, the criteria are based on their competence as well as their academic qualifications and their professional experience as trainers.

The HRDA also carries out evaluation studies on the effectiveness and impact of its activities. These evaluations are announced on a specific part of the [HRDA's website](#). In this context, the HRDA has prepared the study '[Indicators of Participation in HRDA's activities 2012-2018](#)' on a regular basis. The main objective of the study is the analysis of the participation in HRDA's activities, for example, during 2012-2018, and specifically the number of enterprises which participated and received subsidies, the number of eligible

enterprises which paid the Human Resource Development Levy, the subsidies provided to enterprises by the HRDA and the levy paid by enterprises.

It must be noted that the analysis includes those schemes for which enterprises receive a subsidy for the participation of their employees and does not include all the schemes from which they benefit, such as the schemes providing job placements for the unemployed for the acquisition of work experience. For those schemes, there are specific studies which will be mentioned later.

Some of the main indicators/criteria mentioned in the study 'Indicators of Participation in HRDA's activities' are:

- The number of enterprises participating in the HRDA's activities
- Percentage coverage indicator of enterprises benefiting from HRDA's activities
- Coverage Indicators by Economic Sectors
- Coverage Indicators by Size of Enterprise
- Coverage Indicators by District

In addition, regarding evaluation studies conducted for the impact of the 'scheme for job placement of unemployed young tertiary education graduates for the acquisition of work experience', some indicators being mentioned are:

- Impact of the scheme on employability (both on broader public and private sector)
- Percentage of participants in the scheme who continue to work in the enterprise/organisation of their placement
- The employment status of participants
- The degree of utilisation of knowledge and skills acquired
- The degree of improvement of employment prospects
- The satisfaction of participants in the scheme

Lastly, as stated in the HRDA's evaluation studies, based on the level of contribution of each Scheme in alleviating youth unemployment, new calls of the schemes are announced.

3.7 Cross-border mobility in employment, entrepreneurship and vocational opportunities

Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

The main top-level programmes/schemes, for cross-border mobility are:

Your First EURES Job Mobility Scheme

EURES is a cooperation network designed to facilitate the free movement of workers within the EU28 countries plus Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. The network is composed of the European Coordination Office (ECO), the National Coordination Offices (NCOs), EURES Partners and the Associated EURES Partners.

Partners in the network may include Public Employment Services (PES), Private employment services (PRES), trade unions, employers' organisations and other relevant actors in the labour market. The partners provide information, placement and recruitment services to employers and jobseekers whereas the European and National Coordination Offices oversee the organisation of the activities at European and national level respectively. In Cyprus, EURES is well integrated into the operations of the Public Employment Services (PES) of the [Department of Labour](#). All EURES Services in Cyprus are offered by the PES through a network of 7 EURES Advisers in all major cities in Cyprus, All EURES Advisers have received the proper training at EU Level.

In every district and local PES office, EURES services are highly visible. EURES desks, clearly marked with EURES signs, are situated next to other PES services while job-seekers can access the EURES Job Portal from the self-service area available in all offices.

'Your first EURES Job' is a 'targeted mobility scheme', financing mobility in Europe.

Candidates must be nationals and legal residents in any of those countries. The scheme aims to help young people up to 35 years old to find a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in another member state.

The public funding available at top level to support the above-mentioned opportunity is not available.

The EURODYSSEE Programme

Eurodyssée is a programme for young people aged between 18 and 30 years old, who are resident in one of the programme's member regions. Under this programme, trainees are entitled to:

- Traineeships from 3 to 7 months
- Language Courses
- Accommodation
- Monthly allowance or salary
- Insurance cover
- Certificates

In Cyprus, Eurodyssée is jointly managed by the Department of Labour (EURES Network) of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance and the [Union of Cyprus Municipalities](#) (UMC). For support and guidance, youth who are interested must contact the Department of Labour.

According to the [Eurodyssée news](#) The Eurodyssée programme in Cyprus is co-funded by the Republic of Cyprus and the European Social Fund. The department of Labour has secured a grant of 20,000 EUR per year for 3 years which will enable the welcoming of 4 or 5 trainees to Cyprus each year.

Erasmus Programme for Young Entrepreneurs- Cyprus

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs helps provide aspiring European entrepreneurs with the skills necessary to start and/or successfully run a small business in Europe. New entrepreneurs gather and exchange knowledge and business ideas with an experienced entrepreneur, with whom they stay and collaborate for a period of 1 to 6 months.

There are 3 areas selected by the European Commission to guide youth throughout their exchange: help with the application, help to establish a successful relationship with a suitable entrepreneur, as well as providing answers to questions. Youth should choose a local contact point which is active in their region. Youth may also be offered the opportunity to participate in an induction course to prepare them for the exchange. There is no information about the public funding for the above-mentioned opportunity.

Cyprus Start-up Visa For Foreign Nationals Of Non EU Countries

The 'Cyprus Start-up Visa' programme/scheme allows talented entrepreneurs from third countries [outside the European Union (EU) and outside the European Economic Area (EEA)], individuals or in a team, to enter, reside and work in Cyprus in order to establish/operate/develop a start-up with a high growth potential, provided that they meet certain criteria. The programme run between 2017-2019 and now the Ministry of Finance renewed the programme for another 2 years (March 2019-March 2021).

There is no information about the support and guidance to young people engaging in this cross-border mobility.

The public funding made available at top level to support above-mentioned opportunity is not available.

Legal framework

There are no top-level policy measures setting a clear legal framework applying to incoming and outgoing young workers, trainees/apprentices and young professionals/entrepreneurs. However, information about each country's regulations, social security, etc. can be found on the website of the EURES Network under the section '[Living and Working](#)'.

Especially for incoming young people who would like to work in Cyprus, information can be found on the website of the [EURES Cyprus](#).

3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

Policy Framework

There is no central level strategy related to entrepreneurship competence of an entrepreneurial mind-set among young people in Cyprus. However, a [National Policy Statement for the Enhancement of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Cyprus](#) has been formulated, in close cooperation with the [Ministry of Commerce and Industry](#), and endorsed by the Council of Ministers on the 14th December 2015. This policy document also focuses specifically on social cohesion and on the employment of people experiencing difficulties in accessing the labour market. The Policy Statement provides for targeted actions to be promoted under five Priority Axes:

- Cultivating the entrepreneurial culture
- Improving the business environment
- Enhancing the entrepreneurial innovation
- Facilitating access to finance
- Improving access to markets

In addition to that, the Government formulated the Policy Statement on the Enhancement of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Cyprus. The policy statement establishes a comprehensive policy framework and a targeted action plan for the integrated development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country. The main purpose is the creation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem that will contribute to the country's economic growth, by providing the proper conditions for the successful development of business initiatives, ensuring the creation of added value for the whole economy.

The Policy Statement is the result of an extensive consultation with all the key stakeholders of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Cyprus.

The Statement recognizes five priority areas:

1. Cultivation of an entrepreneurial
2. Culture Improvement of the Business Environment
3. Entrepreneurial Innovation
4. Access to Finance
5. Access to markets.

Moreover, one of the [National Action Plan for Youth Employment](#)'s objective is "to promote Entrepreneurship as a career path - Boosting labour demand through sectoral growth, promotion of micro- and small enterprises and entrepreneurship development". The aim to promote youth entrepreneurship as a viable career option for young Cypriots builds on

the access to finance, with a focus on those economic sectors that have been identified as key for the development of the country.

The attainment of the youth entrepreneurship development objective is grounded on two interlinked outcomes: 1) the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme, and 2) the Social Enterprise programme, 3) the provision of training and advisory services for young people wishing to set up their own account activity.

Formal learning

Based on the [Eurydice Entrepreneurship Education study published in February 2016](#), Entrepreneurship education is not explicitly recognised in steering documents and implementation guidelines. However, since 2010, new curricula for primary and secondary education have been developed and implemented focusing on key competences, including creativity and innovation. In these, as part of the educational innovation that started back in 2004, there is an emphasis on developing competences related to entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity. More specifically, the 1st Annual Progress Report published in January 2017 by the Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry mentions that the new curricula of the Cyprus Ministry of Education aim at cultivating the following skills, attitudes and competences which are useful in a modern competitive society:

- Creativity;
- Critical thinking;
- Theoretical thinking and the ability to translate theory into practice;
- Analytical skills and abilities;
- The ability to collaborate and exchange information;
- The ability to solve problems and, at the same time, to find alternatives;
- Excellent and prudent use of information and communication technologies;
- Consciousness and interpersonal communication skills.

In addition, students in the 2nd year of lower secondary education can also gain experience in a profession of their choice over one week (Working gaining experiences week). Also, two or three times a year, the "Enterprise Day programme" gives students the opportunity to become familiar with the workplace and the daily activities of a person in business.

Equally important is the progress made in the acquisition of experiential learning skills through the participation of students of all ages in competitions and/or entrepreneurship programs. For example:

- The University of Cyprus in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture conducts an annual entrepreneurship competition for students in the second and third year of upper secondary education.
- The program "JA More than Money" was also launched in primary education in cooperation with the non-profit organization "Junior Achievement Cyprus" and the Association of Cyprus Banks. The program aims to familiarize children with concepts related to management of money, such as income, expenses, savings. Students in this context develop skills and understand concepts through experiential learning.
- In secondary schools, it is implemented on a voluntary basis the "[JA Company Programme](#)" which provides an entrepreneurial learning experience for young people aged 15 to 18. The programme seeks to nurture a new generation of entrepreneurial, innovative and civic-minded talents for Cyprus. It is the largest youth entrepreneurship programme on the island. Participants learn how to take a business idea from concept to reality and have hands-on experience of running a real business, from team formation, capital raising, business plan development, product development, marketing and sales to liquidating the company.

Also, as mentioned in the [Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies: Country Assessment Notes, Cyprus, 2018](#), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, with the support of the Pedagogical Institute initiated a series of entrepreneurial training programmes and competitions targeting secondary education teachers and students. While still at the beginning of their implementation, these programmes appear to have a high impact amongst students and educators: there has been an increased interest in running intraschool entrepreneurial competitions, participating in business idea/plan programmes and competitions, submitting bids on the themes of entrepreneurship and innovation, etc. These action help strengthen the entrepreneurial culture within the education system in Cyprus, which is expected to have a role in building an entrepreneurship culture more broadly.

Non-formal and informal learning

There are not any top-level policy measures and/or large-scale public initiatives to encourage young people to develop entrepreneurial skills and attitudes through youth work and volunteering. Currently, there are also not any policies regulating the recognition and validation of entrepreneurial learning in non-formal and informal learning environments.

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

There are not any existing top-level policies and public initiatives providing support to the work of educators and youth workers in the field of entrepreneurship.

3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs

Access to information

The top-level policy measures implemented to ensure that young people know about funding opportunities to create a start-up, programmes and service providers devoted to the funding of start-up, and specific professional guidance are the following:

1. The Youth Board of Cyprus is responsible to promote the [Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme](#) which operates under the umbrella of the Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry (Industrial Development Service).

More specifically, the Youth Board of Cyprus is responsible for:

- The promotion of the program and the distribution of relevant information to young people
 - The organization of seminars to present the program
 - The provision of technical assistance and other consultation to interested people
 - The enhancement of the cooperation among young entrepreneurs participating to the program.
2. At the same time, the Youth Board of Cyprus has taken the initiative to promote the [Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme](#), the mission of which is to support unemployed young people aged 15 to 29 who want to undertake entrepreneurship initiatives, and at the same time promote business culture in Cyprus.

More specifically, the Youth Board is responsible to:

- Provide education and development of business skills, such as business plan creation, project management / management, sales and communication techniques, business start-ups, etc.
- Provide guidance through a network of mentors and advisors
- Provide support and information through a dedicated online platform.

In addition, access to information on schemes and programmes can be found online on the website of the [Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry](#).

Access to capital

The grant based schemes for young entrepreneurs specific for start-up creation are the following:

1. The "[Students in Action](#)" Program is a new grant program, implemented by the Youth Board of Cyprus in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture. The purpose of the Program is to support and empower students. The program aims to: (a) enhance research and documentation on youth issues, (b) enhance the employability of young people through strengthening their skills and abilities, (c) strengthen the participation of students and (d) enhance student entrepreneurship. The "Students in Action" Program supports and is linked to the implementation of the National Youth Strategy.
2. "[Grant scheme on the Enhancement of Youth Entrepreneurship](#)" under the umbrella of the [Ministry of Commerce and Industry](#). The program aims to develop, support and promote entrepreneurship to young people for the development of new and sustainable small/medium enterprises, through financial support and educational training courses. Through this scheme particular emphasis is given to the usage of new technologies and innovative production methods, to the promotion of products and services, to the enhancement of entrepreneurship in the field of the environment and generally to the promotion of modern entrepreneurial operations for the development of dynamic, evolving and competitive businesses. Young people can participate in this program if they:
 - Have reached the 20th year of age and do not exceed the 39th at the date of application submission.
 - Are unemployed, employed or self-employed.
 - Did not exercise any business activity at least a year before the date of the application submission.
3. The Cyprus Entrepreneurship Fund (CYPEF). As mentioned in the [National Reform Plan 2019](#), the Cyprus Entrepreneurship Fund supports both working capital and investment loans to Small-Medium Enterprises.
4. Tax incentives. As mentioned in the [National Reform Plan 2019](#), the amended Income Tax Law N135(I)/2016, established a framework of incentives effective from January 2017 until the end of 2020 through tax relief to individuals who invest in innovative Small-Medium Enterprises, including start-ups, either directly or through an investment fund. The incentives provide for the following:
 - exemption of the investment from the investor's taxable income (up to a maximum amount of 50% of the taxable income);
 - deduction of up to €150,000 per year as well as the right of allocation and distribution of the
 - discount in a 5 (five) year period, and investment in shares, loans, or granting guarantees to innovative companies.

3.10 Promotion of entrepreneurship culture

Some of the public measure or initiatives organised at top level by public funds in order to promote the entrepreneurship culture are the following:

1. Annual Conference on Entrepreneurship and Start-ups organized by the Youth Board of Cyprus. The first conference was implemented in [December 2017](#) and the second in [February 2019](#). Both of which were very successful in attracting a big number of young people and informing them about entrepreneurship.

2. The Youth Board of Cyprus is responsible to promote the [Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme](#) which operates under the umbrella of the Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry (Industrial Development Service). More specifically, the Youth Board of Cyprus is responsible for:
 - The promotion of the program and the distribution of relevant information to young people
 - The organization of seminars to present the program
 - The provision of technical assistance and other consultation to interested people
 - The enhancement of the cooperation among young entrepreneurs participating to the program.
3. At the same time, the Youth Board of Cyprus has taken the initiative to promote the [Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme](#), the mission of which is to support unemployed young people aged 15 to 29 who want to undertake entrepreneurship initiatives, and at the same time promote business culture in Cyprus. More specifically, the Youth Board is responsible to:
 - Provide education and development of business skills, such as business plan creation, project management / management, sales and communication techniques, business start-ups, etc.
 - Provide guidance through a network of mentors and advisors
 - Provide support and information through a dedicated online platform.

The Program will be implemented in cycles all over Cyprus. Each round of seminars will last for a total of 28 hours, and after completion each participant will receive personalized counseling from experienced business mentors.
4. The Annual Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum which is run by the [Centre for Entrepreneurship \(C4E\)](#) of the University of Cyprus and its partners. The [fourth edition of the Forum was done in April 2019](#). The Forum highlights research results with a potential for market exploitation and/or societal impact and celebrate entrepreneurial success, by awarding individuals or teams that excelled in innovative entrepreneurship in Cyprus or abroad. It brings together multidisciplinary knowledge from researchers, professionals, industry and business leaders and successful entrepreneurs seeking for potential research, economic and technological synergies.
5. "[Students in Research - MERA](#)" and "[Technology and Innovation in Education - TEKE](#)". Both competitions are organized by the [Research Promotion Foundation](#) and are being launched in cooperation with the [Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation](#).

Networks and partnerships

There are no public policies or initiatives organised at top level, by public funds, specifically targeting young people.

3.11 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Currently, the [Action Plan for Social Enterprises](#) is being discussed. The Action Plan will endorse 3 priorities:

- Creating a friendly business environment
- Promoting a culture of social entrepreneurship
- Enhancing Access to Funding

The Action Plan is put forward by the Department of Administrative Reform.

Moreover, as mentioned in the [National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020](#), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth is in the process of developing a mechanism for validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning which will also cover how entrepreneurial competences are acquired through non-formal and informal learning

Furthermore, The Department of Labour Relations promotes the preparation and implementation of legislation which sets and safeguards the minimum employment conditions and a range of other rights and obligations for both workers and employers, such as flexible forms of employment, part-time employment, etc.

Lastly, the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment is in the process of designing the new Rural Development Policy of the Republic of Cyprus. Its purpose is to boost the competitiveness of agriculture sector, to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources and achieve a balanced territorial development, including the creation of employment opportunities. For this purpose, the Ministry and the Youth Board of Cyprus are scheduling a number of consultations with young people which will take place in January 2020.

Ongoing debates

There are currently not any ongoing debates taking place in the public or political sphere.

4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

The [Strategy for Social Policy 2014-2020](#) is the primary strategy dealing with social inclusion in the country. The cross-sectoral cooperation is a key element of the strategy and a lot of actions happen in order to support the social inclusion of groups at risk.

A highlight is that over the last years, policies and services for the social inclusion of people have been reinforced. However, a main challenge remains the fact that there is a lack of services targeting specifically young people.

4.1 General context

Main challenges to social inclusion

There are different challenges when it comes to social inclusion of young people in Cyprus. According to the [Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey](#) conducted by the Statistical Service in 2018 in Cyprus, the risk-of-poverty is 15.4, while the risk-of-poverty rate for children 0-17 years old is 17.3. [Risk-of-poverty rate is the share of persons with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfer) below the risk-of-poverty threshold. It measures relative poverty and not absolute poverty]. The percentage of the population living in households with very low work intensity is in total 8.6%. At the same time, the percentage of population which cannot afford to pay at least 4 out of the 9 material deprivation items (having thus severe material deprivation) is 10.2%. Last, the same study reveals that the Risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for adults is for Nationals at 21.2%, for EU28 Foreigners at 27.8% and for non-EU28 Foreigners at 40%.

Moreover, the [Demographic Statistics 2018](#) of the Statistical Service counts that in 2014, 9.212 immigrants arrived to Cyprus, 15.183 immigrants in 2015, 17.391 in 2016, 21.306 in 2017 and 23.442 in 2018. Out of the last number, 16.818 were aged between 20-44 years old.

As said in the [National Programme for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund](#), Cyprus is exposed to high flows of potential beneficiaries of international protection. Statistics show that these have been constant over the past years and, based on the instability of the region, they will continue until 2020. The number of asylum applications in 2013 was 1246 (994 cases) and 1728 (1373 cases) in 2014 (38% increase). By April 2015 the number of asylum seekers pending before the Asylum Service (AS) was 1652 persons. In 2018, the country also received 7,761 applications for asylum as described by the Cyprus Refugee Council in the report "[Overview of statistical practice](#)". In addition to that, according to the [Education and Training MONITOR 2018- Cyprus Report](#), 221 unaccompanied minors, coming from Syria, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries, applied for asylum in 2016 and another 109 in 2017.

Main concepts

There is no national definition of social inclusion. However, the main concepts associated to social inclusion, as stated in the [Strategy for Social Policy 2014-2020](#) prepared by the [Social Welfare Services](#) of the [Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#) are unemployment, poverty, health, education and housing.

4.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The main actor involved in policy making in the field of social inclusion of young people is the [Social Welfare Services](#) of the [Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#). The Ministry's role is the promotion of social justice within a free democratic system based on the pillars of social cohesion and social inclusion. The Ministry cares about the maintenance

and continuous improvement of the standard of living and the quality of life of the working population and of society in general.

In addition to this, another important actor in policy making in the field is the [Department for Women issues- Gender Equality](#) of the [Ministry of Justice and Public Order](#). The Unit has the primary responsibility for shaping, coordinating and implementing governmental equality policy and monitoring international developments. The Unit also monitors the [National Mechanism for Women's Rights](#) which was established to promote equality and women's rights in all areas of life.

Together with these two Ministries, the following public actors are also involved in policy making:

The [Gender Equality Commissioner's office](#) which is the institution responsible for designing Gender Equality Policies, implementing and monitoring the implementation of these policies.

The [Office of the Commissioner for Children's Rights](#) whose mission is to protect and promote the rights of the child. Her role is to represent children and their interest at all levels, to promote public awareness and sensitivity so that children's rights in the family, at school, in the community are safeguarded and to identify and promote the views of children where they themselves cannot be heard, to monitor legislation relating to children and to submit proposals aiming at their harmonization with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to carry out public awareness campaigns, to appoint a representative of the child in judicial proceedings affecting him/her and to represent children in procedures affecting them.

The [Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment](#) which undertakes the immense responsibility, to promote through an integrated coordination, the protection and sustainable management of the environment, natural resources, and the sustainable management of agricultural, livestock and fisheries production. Related to social inclusion, the ministry aims to ensure a better quality of life for the current and future generations.

The [Ministry of Justice and Public Order](#) which is responsible for the close review and consideration of the need to reform the existing legislation in a wide field of public and private law, such as criminal law, legislation that falls within the general concept of the administration of justice, family law, legislation in the fields of equality, human rights, the treatment of offenders and other. Its activities furthermore include the promotion, in collaboration with the Supreme Court, of legislative and administrative measures for the unhampered administration of Justice and the smooth functioning of the courts and criminological research for the formation of policies for the prevention and suppression of crime. It has also the responsibility, through the Police Force that the Minister of Justice and Public Order politically heads, of the maintenance of law and order, the preservation of peace and the prevention and detection of crime.

The [Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry](#) aims to secure Cyprus' energy supplies in order to meet the needs of the country with the least burdens on the economy and the environment. In order to achieve the above objective, it implements activities related to the creation of necessary energy infrastructure, the integration and supervision of the internal energy market, the promotion of energy saving, the exploitation of indigenous renewable energy sources and the protection of sensitive consumers.

The [Ministry of Interior](#) whose mission is to formulate and implement human-centered policies. The anthropocentric action of the Ministry of the Interior is based on the following policy pillars:

- A qualitative upgrading of the services provided to the citizen
- Answer to the new housing plans put into effect on 1.1.2007
- Upgrading the role and restructuring of local government

- The intensification of the efforts to reconstruct and simplify the processes that prove inadequate to meet the modern needs and needs of the citizens

[The Ministry of Finance](#) whose mission is to ensure conditions of macroeconomic stability and the sound management of resources and of the financial obligations of the State, in order to improve the quality of life of every citizen of the Republic.

[The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#) which is responsible for the fields of education, youth, sports and culture, as well as the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) who runs under the Ministry and is responsible for advising the Minister and the Council of Ministers on youth issues and also the [Cyprus Sports Organization](#) which is connected to the Ministry and takes care of the sports culture in the country.

[The Ministry of Health](#) whose mission is the continuous improvement of the health of the population of Cyprus, through the prevention of disease, and the provision to every citizen of high level health care, respecting the rights of every patient to high quality medical care delivered with dignity.

[The Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development](#) which is responsible for handling issues related to:

(a) the European Funds and Programmes, such as the European Investment and Structural Funds, the EU Competitive Programmes and the grants provided by the countries of the European Economic Area and Switzerland.

(b) development and horizontal issues, such as Research, Technological Development and Innovation, Lifelong Learning, Corporate Social Responsibility and the "Europe 2020" Strategy.

The [Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works](#) whose mission is the design and implementation of policies for the continuous improvement of transport (air, maritime and land) and of communications, as well as the continuous upgrading of the quality of projects implemented by the Ministry. In addition, the better promotion and exploitation of the archaeological wealth as well as other resources of the country is pursued. Additional to the Ministry, its following departments are also included: [Department of Public Works](#), [Department of Antiquities](#).

Several departments of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, such as [Social Welfare Services](#), [Department of Labour](#), [Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities](#), [Department of Labour Relations](#), [Unit of the European Social Fund](#), [Higher Hotel Institute](#), the [Statistical Service](#), the Grant and Benefit Service, the [Cyprus Productivity Centre](#), the [Human Resource Development Authority](#).

The [Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights \(Ombudsman\)](#) is a senior independent state officer. The institution of the ombudsman constitutes the most prevalent institution of extra judicial control of the administration and protection of human rights. The main pivots of the mission of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights are to ensure legality, to promote good governance, to combat maladministration and to protect citizens' rights and human rights in general.

Apart from this, the main non-public actors taking part in the development of policies in the field of youth social inclusion are the following:

[The Union of Cyprus Municipalities](#) which is the main association of Local Authorities in Cyprus. Its core functions are to contribute to the development of local government autonomy, as well as to act as spokesman of local government interests vis-a-vis the central government and other national institutions. It also takes an active stand in the relations between Cyprus and the European Union.

[The Union of Cyprus Communities](#) whose aims are:

1. The defence and promotion of the Members' powers, interests, rights and privileges and, generally, of the independence and self-sufficiency of the Local Authorities.

2. The permanent and on an organised basis cooperation and exchange of views between them, for the achievement of common targets.
3. The collection of data and information being useful for the cooperation of the Communities.
4. The expression of opinions to any Authority, Body, Organism or person (including the Government and the House of Representatives) and claiming from the state matters aiming at the development and expansion of the Local Self-Government institution.
5. The participation in International Organs of Local Self-Government and its representation at Local and International Congresses.

[The Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus](#) which is a democratic progressive labor union that aims to preserve and improve wages and benefits, safety and health at work, and the social protection of all workers, who systematically defend labor rights and claim a decent standard of living in the economic and social environment of Cyprus and Europe.

[The Pancyprian Federation of Labour](#) which is a labour union

[The Pancyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council](#) whose mission is to promote the principles and values of volunteerism, to advance the shared interests of the voluntary organisations and to deliver a strategic vision for the further development of the voluntary sector.

There is no distribution of responsibilities between top-level and regional/local authorities. All responsibilities remain at top-level.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

A mechanism of cross-sectorial cooperation has been set up for the [Strategy for Social Policy 2014-2020](#) between Ministries, Departments, Agencies involved in defining policies and measures on social inclusion. At the same time, all the stakeholders involved in this Strategy are represented by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance at the Cross-sectorial Working Group on Youth working for the National Youth Strategy (Εθνική Στρατηγική για τη Νεολαία).

In particular, for the development of the Strategy, the Social Welfare Services, as the competent coordinating authority for social protection and integration issues, worked closely with representatives of the two main categories of partners:

- Ministries / Services and Local Authorities, and
- Social partners and civil society

Following the adoption of the Package of Social Investment Measures, the Social Welfare Services carried out an analysis of the main points of the measures and briefly outlined the policy pillars stemming from them as well as the recommendations from the European Commission. Then, a roadmap was then prepared for each section of the package.

Then, the Social Welfare Services sent the road map to all stakeholders, inviting them to provide a brief description of their sector's mission and their development goals for the 2014-2020 period, their views on the European Commission's recommendations contained in the Package, the list of measures / actions falling within their responsibilities, and the record of their planned actions for the period 2014-2020.

Based on the data collected, a first draft was prepared with the contributions and positions of the involved parties, which was sent to all stakeholders for gathering views / positions on the final Strategy. On the basis of their feedback, the final draft of the Social Policy Strategy for the period 2014-2020 was prepared.

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

There is not a national strategy on the social inclusion exclusively of young people. However, the [Strategy for Social Policy 2014-2020](#) (Στρατηγική για την Κοινωνική Πολιτική) targets the whole population of the country, which also includes young people. This strategy is the government's decree which outlines the social priorities of the Republic of Cyprus for the period 2014-2020.

Moreover, one of the 8 action fields of the National Youth Strategy ([Εθνική Στρατηγική για τη Νεολαία](#)) is Social Inclusion. The National Youth Strategy was adopted in May 2017 by the Council of Ministers and it covers the period from 2017 until 2022. The Strategy is cross – sectorial hence it incorporates all the policies that concern young people.

Scope and contents

The focus of the State's effort through the Strategy for Social Policy is to better address the social impact of the economic crisis by building a strong and efficient social state, achieving economic recovery, citizens' prosperity and rapid and balanced development in conditions of stability, justice and social cohesion. In this context, the key objective of the Republic of Cyprus is to introduce viable social welfare and health systems as well as to preserve and empower the family, society and local authorities in order to enable the citizens to respond to their roles.

Based on these, the goals of the Strategy are:

1. Promote child welfare: This goal is geared to improve public investment.
2. Reform of the Welfare System
3. Active inclusion, with ensuring adequate income, integration into the labor market and access to quality and affordable services
4. Long-term care
5. Effective Governance

The Strategy identifies children, people with disabilities, the elderly who need long-term care and people trapped in welfare benefits as specific target groups within the whole population. However, the strategy mentions in different parts of the document several groups identified as at-risk of social exclusion, such as the unemployed, people at risk for poverty, young NEETs, immigrants.

What's more, a main priority of the [National Youth Strategy](#) (NYS) is to promote equality and the respect of human rights so as to eliminate social discrimination against young people. In order to achieve this purpose, a culture that encourages social inclusion should be created.

Social inclusion allows all young people, regardless of their background, to enjoy their social rights freely. At the same time, it is a dynamic process which allows all social groups to participate in a dialogue that aims at social peace.

Goal 1 of the NYS: Ensure equality and respect of human rights.

Goal 2 of the NYS: Create a mindset that promotes social inclusion.

The National Youth Strategy priorities for achieving the above goals are the following:

1. Provide constant information to young people on the rights of groups with fewer opportunities or groups of people who might be threatened with social exclusion.
2. Develop actions that contribute to social inclusion and to the participation of young people with fewer opportunities or who are threatened with social exclusion.

3. Develop actions that contribute to reducing discrimination among G/C and T/C youth.
4. Promote actions for social inclusion and against social exclusion in the school environment.
5. Promote actions and programs that will encourage and develop social participation for groups that are threatened with social exclusion (i.e. through special equipment, structured environment guidelines, etc.).
6. Develop creative expression, arts and foreign language learning as means of diversity, tolerance and respect.
7. Encourage the participation of people with fewer opportunities in mobility programs for skills and abilities development.

Responsible authority

The top-level authority responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the Strategy for Social Policy is the [Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#) and particularly the by the [Social Welfare Services](#). The strategy is not integrated in any other national strategy fighting exclusion. So far, there is not information about evidence-based monitoring/assessment/evaluation of the implementation of the strategy.

The national coordinator for the drafting, and monitoring of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy is the Youth Board of Cyprus. For the implementation of the Strategy a Cross-sectorial Working Group on Youth is established in order to ensure constant coordination and close cooperation among all governmental institutions that deal with youth issues. The Cross-sectorial Working Group has developed the first 3-year Action Plan (2017-2019) which will be monitored via regular progress reports coordinated by the Youth Board of Cyprus.

Revisions/Updates

The strategies have not undergone major revisions/updates. For the updates on the National Youth Strategy you can visit [chapter 1](#).

4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

Programmes specific for vulnerable young people

1. The [National Programme for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund \(AMIF\)](#) (Εθνικό Πρόγραμμα Ταμείου Ασύλου, Μετανάστευσης και Ένταξης). It was introduced in 2015 and has a time frame 2014-2020. The responsible authority for the implementation and coordination of this programme is the Ministry of Interior and the European Funds Unit. Basically, the programme provides funds through an open call and thus State authorities, local public bodies, non-governmental organisations, international public organisations or private and public law companies can implement projects relevant with the aim of the programme. The projects of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund mainly aim to support the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), strengthen the accommodation capacity of asylum seekers, provide of all necessary services related to asylum procedures, facilitate the integration of third country nationals in the local community with the help of local authorities/NGO's/public bodies/other social partners, increase assisted voluntary returns, increase cooperation with other member states as well as support the administrative capacity of Cyprus to manage successfully all sectors related to migration.

On one hand, the programme targets third country nationals in the local community (asylum seekers and immigrants) with an aim to achieve their integration in the society. On the other hand, the programme targets local community, with an aim to raise awareness and facilitate the acceptance of the third country nationals.

There are not data on youth participation in these programmes.

2. [The National Drugs Policy and Alcohol Policy 2013-2020](#) [Εθνική Στρατηγική για την αντιμετώπιση της εξάρτησης από παράνομες ουσίες και την επιβλαβή χρήση του αλκοόλ 2013-2020] runs under the [Cyprus National Addictions Authority](#). The Authority the Cyprus is the coordinating body in the field of legal and illegal dependency substances and gambling and has been the evolution of the Anti-Drug Council since November 2017. The National Policy is consisted of 2 Action Plans, the Action Plan 2013-2016 and the Action Plan 2017-2020.

There are more than 30 public and other actors involved in the proposed programmes of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority, such as ministries, the Cyprus Police, the Youth Board of Cyprus, associations, trade unions, NGOs. Their role is to implement collectively the strategy.

The level and trends of participation in these programmes are not yet recorded by the official statistics, although the [Report of the first Action Plan 2013-2016](#) is released.

3. The [Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities](#) (Τμήμα Κοινωνικής Ενσωμάτωσης Ατόμων με Αναπηρίες) was established in 2009 and offers a variety of services and social benefits to people with disabilities. The department is under the [Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#). Each service offered to people with disabilities has different criteria, starting dates, target groups and services provided. The services offered are: 1. Severe Motor Disability Allowance Scheme, 2. Care Allowance Scheme for Quadriplegic Persons, 3. Care Allowance Scheme for Paraplegic Persons, 4. Special Allowance for Blind Persons, 5. Mobility Allowance, 6. Allowance to persons with disability for the provision of a car, 7. Scheme for the Provision of Financial Assistance for the Purchase of a Wheelchair, 8. Scheme for Wheelchair Loans to persons with motor Disability, 9. Disability Parking Card Scheme (Blue Badge), 10. Financial assistance scheme for the provision of technical means, instruments and other aids, 11. Scheme for the management/provision of technical means, instruments and other aids, 12. Financial Assistance for Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, 13. Financial Assistance to the Organisations of Persons with Disabilities for hiring Social Assistants for their members, 14. Assistance through the Welfare Lottery Fund.

There are not other actors involved and the level and trends of participation of young people in these programmes are not available, although an [annual report](#) is drafted.

4. The "[Actions for social and school inclusion \(DR.A.S.E.\)](#)" («Δράσεις Σχολικής και Κοινωνικής Ένταξης (ΔΡΑ.Σ.Ε.)») 2015-2023 run by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth. Key actors involved are the schools which basically implement the programme. The programme refers to the implementation of actions aiming to support and strengthen public school pupils and at the same time to promote school and social inclusion. The project aims to support, expand and improve the outcomes of the project against "Early School Leaving, School Failure and Delinquency in Zones of Educational Priority". The main variation of the project "Activities of School and Social Inclusion" in relation to its predecessor is that the new project is not zone based, i.e. school units will not be grouped into geographical clusters. Rather, individual school units and / or clusters of schools (kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, and technical schools) are selected, regardless of the geographical area in which they are located. The project's main objectives are the following:
 - Support the Cypriot population living below the poverty line or being at risk of poverty and social exclusion;
 - Ensure the welfare and support of the financially weaker groups of the population particularly affected by the economic crisis;

- Reduction of early school leaving;
- Improvement of learning outcomes;
- Reducing school failure and delinquency;
- Strengthening social cohesion by reducing the risk of social marginalization and exclusion.

DRASE program develops innovative preventive actions, such as the creation of a space for the development of creative and entertaining activities, the creation of student clubs (dance, theater, journalism, music, painting, amateur radio, football, etc.) and the development of a program which includes educational, cultural and other activities on health education.

According to the [Minister's announcement on 24/5/2019](#), the programme expands to cover 102 schools during the school years 2019-2023, targeting thus the 15,6% of the schools population.

The trends of participation of young people in this programme are not available.

5. The [Scheme for the Vocational Training of Persons with Disabilities](#) (Σχέδιο Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης Ατόμων με Αναπηρίες) is offered by the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance which is the responsible authority for its implementation. The main purpose of the project is to broaden the opportunities for training and education of people with disabilities based on individual programs in training institutions or private or public-sector enterprises. Beneficiaries are persons with disabilities who may experience employment difficulties in their field, despite their level of education. The Scheme is addressed to people with disabilities of all ages. No specific targets for the level of youth participation have been established. In addition, the level and trends of participation in this scheme are not yet recorded by official statistics.
6. "Provision of Incentives for Hiring Recipients of Guaranteed Minimum Income Combined with a three-month Training Period" Scheme. (Σχέδιο Παροχής Κινήτρων για την Πρόσληψη Δικαιούχων Ελαχίστου Εγγυημένου Εισοδήματος (ΕΕΕ) σε συνδυασμό με τρίμηνη Κατάρτιση). The scheme is provided by the [Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus](#) and offers practical training and work experience opportunities to Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) recipients in order to improve their employability and prepare their employment in a specific enterprise/organisation of the private sector. The target group for this programme is GMI recipients of all age groups. The running period is from 6/7/2017 to 31/12/2020. No specific targets for the level of youth participation have been established. In addition, the level and trends of participation in this scheme are not yet recorded by official statistics.
7. [The National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography](#) (Η Εθνική Στρατηγική και το Σχέδιο Δράσης για την Καταπολέμηση της Σεξουαλικής Κακοποίησης και Εκμετάλλευσης Παιδιών και της Παιδικής Πορνογραφίας) runs between 2016-2019. The responsible authority for the implementation and coordination of the Strategy is the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. At the same time, the following actors are involved:
 - The Ministry of Health
 - The Ministry of Justice and Public Order
 - The Ministry of Education and Culture
 - The Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
 - The Law Office
 - The Police
 - The Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence

- Actors from the private sector who are selected either in their personal capacity because of their involvement and training in child protection issues or from members of Organisations or Associations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the protection of children's rights and / or education and training on children's rights.

The main fields of activity of the Strategy include:

- Primary Prevention (Reducing abuse and exploitation incidents through prevention, strengthening, informing and educating children, including internet security)
- Secondary Prevention (Responding swiftly and timely to the initial problems before they get worse)
- Tertiary Prevention (Tackling incidents after they have occurred)
- Research (Implementing a system to record incidents, Scientific Research)
- Evaluation (Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness and the attainment of the objectives of specific actions.)
- The level and trends of participation are not yet recorder. It's not clear if any targets for the level of participation are established.

Funding

1. For the National Programme for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) there is a specific budget allocated at top level. The amount of funding dedicated to the programme for the period 2014-2020 is 34,918,677.00 euros. It is not clear what is the funding dedicated for the programme in the current year or in the previous one. The programme is financed 90% by the European Social Fund. The remaining 10% is financed by the Republic of Cyprus.
2. The budget of the National Drugs and Alcohol Strategy 2013-2020 is not available, therefore it cannot be said if there is a specific budget allocated at top level or if/how the EU funds are used.
3. The budget for the [Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities](#) is not available, therefore it cannot be said if there is a specific budget allocated at top level or if/how the EU funds are used. The actions of this department are in line with [Strategy for Social Policy 2014-2020](#).
4. The total budget for the DRASE programme until 2023 reaches €29.000.000 Euro and it is co-financed by the European Social Fund (85%) and the Republic of Cyprus (15%).
5. The exact total amount of funding and source of funding for the Scheme for the Vocational Training of Persons with Disabilities are not stated in the official documents.
6. The estimated budget allocated by the HRDA for the "Provision of Incentives for Hiring Recipients of Guaranteed Minimum Income Combined with a three-month Training Period" Scheme is €1.200.000. It is not available if and how the EU funds are used.

Quality assurance

1. For the National Programme for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), a Monitoring Committee is set and is responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of the National Programme. The Committee meets at regular intervals –at least once a year –in order to examine the progress of the programme. Extraordinary meetings may be held if needed. Its purpose is to monitor the progress of the Programme regarding the specific objectives, indicators, financial implementation, deadlines, needs for possible amendments, possible unforeseen circumstances and any other issues that may influence the successful implementation.

The main criteria/indicators/standards used to assess the quality of these programmes are not mentioned. Their main outcomes of quality assurance process are not published.

2. Regarding the National Drugs and Alcohol Strategy 2013-2020, a lot of indicators are set in order to check the implementation of the strategy, as well as several deliverables for each action. The Cyprus National Addictions Authority monitors the assessment of the strategy. The [Report of the first Action Plan 2013-2016](#) is released.
3. The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities does not mention any quality assurance criteria set for the variety of services and social benefits provided to people with disabilities. However, the department releases an [annual report](#).
4. No specific quality assurance criteria are mentioned for the "Actions for social and school inclusion (DR.A.S.E.)".
5. There is not information available if there is a mechanism which monitors the implementation of the Scheme for the Vocational Training of Persons with Disabilities.
6. The HRDA has in place a comprehensive system which was designed by independent external consultants for the "Provision of Incentives for Hiring Recipients of Guaranteed Minimum Income Combined with a three-month Training Period" Scheme. Every year the HRDA conducts evaluation studies regarding the impact of its Schemes on the participants. No quality assurance criteria or any results about the quality assurance process are published for the specific scheme until now.
7. A monitoring committee is established in order to monitor and control the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography.

4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

Intercultural awareness

The main top-level institution that aims to develop intercultural awareness and promote intercultural dialogue is the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#).

Through the adoption of the intercultural model, the Ministry has in recent years promoted a series of actions in the context of [Intercultural Education and Training](#) with the aim of mutual acceptance, confidence building and the elimination of negative stereotypes and prejudices among children. The existing educational policy seeks to smoothly integrate pupils with migrant biography into the Cypriot Educational System and to provide more effective communication by providing education through the provision of enhanced and diversified Greek language learning programs.

Thus, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth offers a website dedicated solely on Intercultural Education and Training. The website targets school teachers and offers educational material that can be used by them to respond more effectively to the needs of migrant students studying in public schools. These materials include books in other languages, guideline books and books with activities that can be done in schools to foster intercultural awareness. Schools are also encouraged to send material and / or good practices that they consider useful and can be used by other teachers.

The website remains constantly available to teachers and its core aim is a democratic school that incorporates and does not exclude. This means equal opportunities for access, participation, success, respecting the diversity and multiculturalism of the student

population as well as individual needs. The vision is a school system that fully recognizes and accepts diversity, pluralism (cultural, linguistic, religious) and multiple intelligence.

In addition to that, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth encourage the development of inter-cultural activities and programs within the frame of school activities.

At the same time, the Youth Board of Cyprus which runs under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth encourages young people and their organised groups to take action enhancing intercultural awareness and respect through its main funding programme, the «[Youth Initiatives Programme](#)». The Programme gives incentives to young people to develop an active role in cultural, sport, political and social activities in Cyprus. It aims at encouraging non-formal learning and active citizenship through volunteerism. One of the fields it covers under «Social Intervention Action» is «Social Discriminations». The objective of the field is to promote social cohesion, acceptance, tolerance, diversity, respect for human rights, as well as in fighting discrimination in general.

Young people's rights

The main top-level initiatives taken in Cyprus to promote young people's rights are the following:

1. [The activities of the Office of the Commissioner for Children's Rights](#): The Commissioner has competence and responsibility (among others) to organise seminars and educational programs relevant to children's rights as well as to promote public awareness and sensitivity so that the society will be mobilized and safeguard in practice children's rights in the family, the school, the community where they live and the society in general. For carrying out her competences the Commissioner meets and talks with children in schools, child care institutions, youth centres, etc. and gives information on the rights of the child through her webpage, publications, seminars, etc. The main target groups addressed are children (until the age of 18 years old) as well as the wider public.
2. [No hate speech movement](#): This is a youth campaign of the Council of Europe for human rights online, to reduce the levels of acceptance of hate speech and develop online youth participation and citizenship, including in Internet governance processes. Cyprus participates in this campaign through the Youth Board of Cyprus. The main target groups are young people.
3. The [National Human Rights Institution](#) of the [Office of the Commissioner of Administration and Human Rights](#) (Ombudsman). The National Human Rights Institution takes action every time the Commissioner observes violation or inadequate protection of human rights, or when it is deemed necessary to promote and cultivate in the wider society a culture of respect for the rights of vulnerable groups of population.
4. Within the framework of its competencies, the National Human Rights Institution can take the following actions:
 - Investigate, on its own initiative, or following the submission of a complaint matters that violate, restrict or adversely affect the human rights of individuals and file reports with its findings and recommendations.
 - Meet and deliberate regularly with non Governmental Organizations, human rights advocates and other concerned groups.
 - Participate and play an active role in meetings, gatherings and other events organized by European, National and International human rights groups.
 - Take any other action to promote and reinforce the care and respect for human rights.

5. ["Code of conduct against racism and guide for management and recording of racist incidents"](#) in schools. This manual is divided in two basic parts: (a) the Code of conduct to combat racism and (b) the Guide for managing and recording racist incidents. In the first part, the necessity for the preparation of the Code is established and a relevant theoretical background is provided. This part includes the purpose and the objectives of the code as well as the responsibilities and commitments undertaken by all members of the school environment. The Guide, on the other hand, entails the steps that need to be taken in order to manage racist incidents as well as a Table of Sanctions. It includes the Self-reflection Document, the Document for the Registration of Racist Incidents and the Yearly Document of Reference of Racist Incidents. The Code and the Guide have been prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and the Curriculum Development Unit, with the contribution of the Anti-Discrimination Authority.
6. The purpose of this manual is to identify any direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional reasons, procedures and processes that lead to negative discrimination for individuals based on their diversity. It also aims to action in order to prevent and tackle racist incidents, and take action in developing anti-racist culture. The main target groups are school students.
7. The ["AWARE"](#) campaign Respect- Accept – Integrate
8. This campaign is co-funded by the European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Republic of Cyprus. For a second consecutive year the campaign seeks to highlight the lives of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in Cyprus.
9. The goal is to get to know each other. With knowledge, information, contact, interaction, respect for identity and diversity, the campaign supports the efforts of the Cypriot state to realize their rights without discrimination. It also supports the effort to smoothly integrate into the host society within the broader European Union policy
10. The Aware campaign includes systematic and multi-level activities such as:
 - Promotion of public debate through the media (news, articles, analyzes, reports)
 - Cooperation through synergies with stakeholders
 - Dissemination of information through social media
 - Illustration the actual data, about the rights and obligations
 - Organization of seminars and experiential workshops, conferences, events and informative days
 - Provision of experiential experiences with audiovisual productions
 - Establishment of a network of co-operation with organizations, associations and journalists.

Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order of Cyprus in [an announcement on 11/03/2016](#), stated that Cyprus has adopted a National Strategy for dealing with Terrorism where all necessary measures are taken to protect critical infrastructures and vulnerable targets, to implement effective border controls and to continuously upgrade technological equipment to enhance the exchange of information.

In addition, the Cyprus Police, operates the [Counter Office Terrorism](#) under Crime Combating Department. One of the basic responsibilities of the Office is to contribute to the [Radicalisation Awareness Network](#). Similar to this, the Cyprus Police released the

[Radicalization and Terrorism – a manual for police officers](#) which helps them track and prevent radicalization.

4.6 Access to quality services

Housing

Since May 2019, Cyprus has a new [Housing Policy Framework](#). This policy framework is run by the [Ministry of Interior](#) together with the [Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance](#), the [Housing Finance Corporation](#) and the [Cyprus Land Development Corporation](#). The policy includes financial support (from 20.000 to 65.000 euros) in order to buy, build or renovate a house directed at single persons, couples, families, single parent families, people with disabilities, low income people/families and displaced people.

In addition, the policy offers financial support for the monthly rent of the displaced people and the people who are recipients of the Guaranteed Minimum Income.

Social services

The [Social Welfare Services](#) of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance offer a number of State Institutions which provide social services to the whole population, including young people. More specifically, state Institutions provide shelter, protection and care to children, the elderly and the disabled as their permanent home or as a place to stay for a few hours during the day. Below the main institutions are presented:

- Nicosia Youth Hostel (boys)

The Nicosia Youth Hostel operates since 1957. It accommodates boys between 13 – 21 years of age, who can not stay elsewhere due to various reasons.

- Youth Hostel for teenage girls

The Youth Hostel for teenage girls started its operation on 3.3.1998. It is the only pancyprian State Institution that provides care and protection to teenage girls who can not stay elsewhere due to various reasons.

- Special State Institution for teenagers

Since November 1997, the Larnaca Youth Hostel has been refurbished upgraded and converted to the Special State Institution for teenagers. It accommodates teenagers who can not live elsewhere.

- “The Child’s Home”

Since January 2018, “The Child’s Home” provides the whole range of necessary services for children who have been victims of sexual abuse and exploitation under the same roof. The Child's Home seeks to serve justice in a child-friendly manner while ensuring child’s safety, security, protection and well-being through a multidisciplinary approach.

The management and operation of “The Child’s Home” is entrusted to the “Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center by the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Insurance, and the overall oversight of the Ombudsman is carried out by the Social Welfare Services in co-operation with competent services.

The Children's Home operates with the direct and systematic cooperation of the Cyprus Police, the Social Welfare Services, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth.

Health care

The top-level policy measures establishing health care services and facilities for young people are the following:

1. [The 1410 Help Line](#) and the [e-counseling](#) (which is the web-site of the 1410 Line). The Help Line and the e-counseling are offered by the Youth Board of Cyprus. The Help Line was introduced in 1990 and it continues offering help until today. It is the first Help Line to operate in Cyprus. This line and e-counseling aim to help people that want to receive responsible answers on issues that concern their daily life, but also on more complex issues such as addictive substances, sexuality issues, eating disorders and further.

The Line and e-counseling offer:

- Information for various psychological issues.
- Information provision for other bodies, organisations and associations operating in our country.
- Referral to other services, when this is considered as important for further evaluation and intervention.
- ‘Counseling’ so that callers will be able to speak about the issue that concerns them, to recognise the next step and be encouraged to do it.
- ‘Crisis management’ in cases that it is an urgent need.

The Line and e-counseling are available for all youth.

2. [Protasi](#): The main aim of the ‘Protasi’ counseling services is to provide support and guidance for young people, couples and families that face difficulties in their lives. This applies for children, adolescents and young people that want to share their personal concerns with a professional counselor in a confidential approach. In addition, couples and parents that face difficulties in their interpersonal relationships or in their families can benefit from this service as well.

The services are offered by the Youth Board of Cyprus and cover the following issues:

- Possible concerns and problems for discussion
 - Relationships problems (friendly, love or marital)
 - Considerations on Substances dependence issues
 - Family violence
 - Antisocial/ delinquent behavior
 - Any other issue of concern
3. [Prevention Centre “Micri Arktos”](#): The main aim of the Prevention Centre is the development of personal and social skills, the enhancement of protective factors and the reduction of factors that may lead a person to the use of addictive substances, to an addictive relationship or to any harmful or delinquent behavior.

Micri Arktos organises and accomplishes prevention programs and fragmented actions (eg lectures) in schools and for the wider community: parents, children, adolescents, teachers and for other social groups (journalists, police officers, militants etc.).

4. [Health Visitors](#) is a service offered by the [Ministry of Health](#). Health visitors, among others offer School Health Services.

Currently the following Health Visitors’ Services are available in Cyprus:

- Maternity and Child Health Care clinics
- School Health Care Services
- Vaccinations and Prevention of Communicable Diseases
- Health Education
- Epidemiological Studies

The main target of this service is the prevention of illness as well as the promotion of health and well being of the students.

The role of the Health Visitor at school:

- To carry out various screening tests in order to detect disease at an early stage or to prevent it.
- To offer health education and health counseling to promote health and prevent illness.
- To care for the ill or injured students or co-ordinate the care given by other professionals.
- To carry out, at school, the vaccinations according to the Cyprus Ministry of Health Vaccinations Schedule.
- To prevent and investigate communicable diseases at school.

Health education is handled by the Health visitors during their daily contacts with students or other school personnel and via applied health education programs which aim at giving knowledge and/or promoting the adaptation of healthy behavior or even changing an unhealthy behavior.

There is not information about the professional development for health care mediators.

A national health mediators network does not exist in Cyprus.

Financial services

Some of the top-level policy measures regarding financial services accessible to young people in Cyprus are the following:

1. Student Grants. Different Student Grants such as [Scholarships](#) or [Allowances](#) are offered on the basis of socio-economic criteria to Cypriot students or students from other EU countries who reside permanently in the Republic of Cyprus or non-EU students who have graduated from Cypriot secondary schools and have at least one parent who is from Cyprus or another EU country. The different grants include: housing allowance per month, board allowance, grant for the purchase of university books and grant for the purchase or upgrade of a computer. The grants are offered by the Ministry of Education and Culture.
2. [Family benefits](#). Family benefits include among others Child Benefit, Single Parent Benefit and the Grant for Special Assistance to single mothers for child birth.
3. [Services and Social Benefits for persons with disabilities](#). These include allowances schemes for people with different kind of disabilities.
4. The [Guaranteed Minimum Income](#) (GMI) scheme. The GMI scheme is part of the Guaranteed Minimum Income and Social Benefits Law of 2014 which has two basic aims: a) to provide better support to groups who were becoming increasingly more exposed to the risk of poverty, and b) to improve the operational efficiency of the overall system. The monetary benefits available fall into two basic categories: a monthly payment to bring the beneficiary's income up to the level of the GMI and monthly housing benefit, either as a rent allowance or as an allowance to cover interest on housing loans. The GMI recipients' eligibility criteria include the following:
 - Age conditions: The applicant must be at least 28 years old. However, this restriction does not apply to married persons, single parents, orphans, disabled persons and persons who are under the legal care of the Director of Social Welfare.
 - Nationality conditions: Third country nationals are eligible if they are permanent residents, refugees or victims of human trafficking.
 - Residency conditions: Recipients should have been legally residing in the controlled area of Cyprus continuously for at least five years before the date of the application.

- Employment conditions: Unemployed and low-paid employees are eligible for the benefit, but a set of conditionalities should be fulfilled.
- Asset conditions: Both the movable and immovable assets of the recipient unit must not exceed a certain amount of money.

Quality assurance

It is not available whether systems of quality assurance of these inclusive services exist in Cyprus.

4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups

The main inclusive youth-work programme in Cyprus is the “[Youth Initiatives Project](#)” of the Youth Board of Cyprus. The Youth Initiatives Project refers to grant activities established by young people and organised youth organisations. One of the programme’s priorities is called “Social interventions” and covers (among others) Prevention, Social Discrimination, Health and Well-Being, Youth and Sport, and Social Contribution Actions. This priority aims at empowering young people with fewer opportunities. At the same time, another priority of the programme is called “Bi-communal Youth Contacts” which aims at strengthening contacts between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriots, aiming at the joint reflection and setting common goals for the future of the place.

Given this, the “Youth Initiatives Project” target youth in general and specifically youth with fewer opportunities and Turkish Cypriot youth.

Targeted young people may participate in the design and delivery of these main inclusive youth work programmes if they decide to apply for a funding through a non-governmental organization.

The real expenses of the Youth Initiative Project for the year 2017 as 975.369. The public funding allocated to the whole Project for 2018 was 943.804 euros and for 2019 was 84.265 as published in the [Cyprus Government Gazette](#) (page 855).

4.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

There are no forthcoming policy developments.

Ongoing debates

There are not any ongoing debates in the public or political sphere.

5. PARTICIPATION

There is not a strategy targeting youth participation in the country, although the topic is underpinned in the [National Youth Strategy](#) and other initiatives taking place. The number and structure of youth representation bodies underlines that youth participation becomes gradually a priority.

A highlight is the young people's participation in policy-making, although there are still limited initiatives dedicated to learning to participate in the country.

5.1 General context

Main concepts

Youth participation emerges as an important aspect of the lives of young people in Cyprus. Politicians, stakeholders and state officials are gradually more concerned about the low level of youth participation in the country. The [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) as well as the [Office of the Commissioner of Volunteerism and NGOs](#) take more actions to measure and boost the youth participation in the social and democratic life.

Institutions of representative democracy

The system of government of the Republic of Cyprus is presidential democracy, with a clear separation of powers between the executive, the legislative and the judicial. As it is stated on the official [website of the House of Representatives](#), Executive power is exercised by the President, the Vice-President and the Council of Ministers, judicial power lies with the courts of the Republic and legislative power is exercised by the House of Representatives and the Communal Chambers.

As it is mentioned both on the website of the House of Representatives, the 1960 constitution has provisions to ensure a balance of power between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. The separate majority of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Representatives needed for the amendment of the electoral law and for the adoption of any law relating to the municipalities or imposing taxes and duties. The House of Representatives, was to be elected by universal suffrage with 35 Greek and 15 Turkish seats and a term of no longer than five years. Under the amendment of 1985, the legislature was to comprise 80 seats (56 Greek, 24 Turkish). In 1996 a system of proportional representation was introduced. The seats reserved for Turkish Cypriots have been unoccupied since 1963.

The presidential term lasts five years, with the next presidential election due in 2018. Ministers, who are appointed by the President, may not be members of the parliament. In the Republic of Cyprus currently there are 11 Ministries. These are:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Resources and Environment
- Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry
- Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works
- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Justice and Public Order

- Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance

As for the district administration, the official website of the [District Administration Offices of the Republic of Cyprus](#) mentions that Cyprus is divided into six administrative districts. These are: Nicosia, Limassol, Pafos, Larnaka, (in the government-controlled areas) and Famagusta and Keryneia (in the occupied areas). Each District is headed by a District Officer who is a senior civil servant appointed by the Government as its local representative. The District Officer is the chief coordinator and liaison for the activities of all Ministries in the District and is accountable to the Ministry of Interior. The District Offices are not elected local or regional authorities, but are part of the civil service.

On local level, there are two types of local authorities, Municipalities and Communities, which are governed by separate laws. In principle, Municipalities constitute the form of local government in urban and tourist centres while communities constitute the local structure in rural areas. Any community may become a municipality by local referendum, subject to the approval of the Council of Ministers, provided it has either a population of more than 5.000, or has the economic resources to function as a municipality. Mayors are elected directly by the citizens on a separate ballot, for a term of five years and are the executive authority of the municipalities. In addition, the official website of the [Union of Cyprus Municipalities](#) mentions that the functions of Communities are generally similar to those of municipalities, although structurally different. The residents of the community elect the President of the Community and the Community Council for a term of five years.

As stated in the [Law for electing members of the parliament 1979](#), all Cypriot citizens who are resident in Cyprus for a period of six months before becoming eligible to vote, have the right to vote. Voting was compulsory in Cyprus and failures to register or to vote were violations of law with sanctions applicable but not enforced in practice. However, based on the [Cyprus Government Gazette](#), on May 31, 2017, the cabinet approved a bill abolishing compulsory voting in elections.

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

Young people as voters

The voting age limit for voting in the elections of the country's representative democracy institutions at all levels, including for the European Parliament elections is 18. In the rare case of a referenda, the age limit for being eligible to vote is again 18.

At the moment, there are not imminent plans or any debate to lower the voting age limit.

There are not any special provisions for young people in the electoral law and/or rules.

There is not any legislation aiming at facilitating specific groups of young people to exercise their voting rights.

The [Ministry of Interior](#) which is responsible for the elections in the country keeps record for the turnout of the whole population, but not the young people specifically. According to the [announcement](#) of the Ministry, in the 2019 European elections, the overall turnout was 44.99%. At the same time, the "[Active youth participation in social and democratic life](#)" research conducted among young people aged 18-35, for the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#), indicated that 72% of the respondents voted in the 2016 parliamentary elections. According to the same sources, in the 2014 European elections, the overall turnout was 42,37% while the turnout of young people was 61%. Last, regarding the 2016 local elections, the [announcement](#) of the Ministry of Interior mentioned that the overall turnout for local council elections was 54.8%. There was not available data for the youth participation in these elections.

Young people as political representatives

There is not any existing top-level legislation dealing with young people as members of political parties.

According to the [Parliamentary elections Law](#), the age limit for standing as a candidate is 26 (candidates must complete the age of 25). According to the [Local elections law](#), the age limit for standing as a candidate is 22 (candidates must complete the age of 21 by the date the elections happen). It must be mentioned that there is not any quota of seats reserved for young people nor any existing provisions aiming at facilitating young people standing as political candidates.

After communicating with the [Ministry of Interior](#), in the last parliamentary elections (2016) 75 young people were candidates in the parliamentary elections 2016, 5 of which were elected. The average age of the members of the parliament is 52. In the most recent Local Elections (2016) young people were the 21.1% of the candidates. Eventually, 19.4% of the people elected are young people. Last, in the European elections 2014, young people were the 8.2% of the candidates and none of them was elected.

There are not any functions reserved for young people within the representative assembly.

5.3 Youth representation bodies

The youth representation bodies in Cyprus are:

Youth parliament

1. Cyprus Children's Parliament

The Cyprus Children's Parliament was set up in 2001. It was a development of the traditional event of Children's Week, during which a group of children occupied symbolically the seats of the members of the Parliament. With the support of the President of our Parliament it was decided that the symbolic event should develop into a formal session in imitation of the normal sessions of Parliament and under his own Chairmanship. The next step was to set up the Children's Parliament as a standing body, in operation throughout the year and not only as an event of Children's Week. The Children's Parliament was an initiative introduced by the PCCPWC (Pancyprian Coordinating Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children). The first "statute" which was passed unanimously by children "parliamentarians" in the Plenary Working Session of September 2004, it was called "The Regulation of the Cyprus Children's Parliament" and consists of 16 articles. The statute has been modified several times through the years. In addition, the article 16 of "The Regulation" details the role of PCCPWC as the support body with rights and obligations concerning the proper operation and development of the new institution. Last, this institution gained substantial recognition from both the State and the Cypriot society, but it is not one of the country's fundamental institutions mentioned in the constitution.

Child "parliamentarian" may be any person under the age of 18 who legally has his/her permanent residence in Cyprus. The Children's Parliament consists of 80 voting members: 56 Greek-Cypriots and 24 Turkish-Cypriots and 3 Observers: 1 Maronite-Cypriot, 1 Latin-Cypriot and 1 Armenian-Cypriot representing the three constitutionally recognized Cypriot minorities. Members are distributed to the five Districts of the Republic in the same analogy as the Republic's House of Representatives. Their term of office is two years and they are elected by District electoral assemblies which consist of delegates nominated by the Pupil's Councils of secondary schools and of non-school delegates (up to 10%) who apply for membership. The Parliament elects its President, Rectors and Secretaries and appoints Special Commissions. The Parliament is convened in Plenary Working Sessions every two months and in an annual celebration session, under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic's House of Representatives, during the Children's Week in November. The Regulation provides for the operation of five District Parliamentary Groups which elect their own officers and convene monthly in preparation for the plenary sessions.

"Guided by the certainty that in a democratic country all citizens must participate in all procedures and implementing the principle of non-discrimination [on the basis of age or any other]" and "because the movement for the defense of children's rights, PCCPWC, considers of capital importance the participation of children themselves in the process of

identification of problems and the introduction of measures for implementing the Convention for the Rights of the Child”, the Children’s Parliament was set up. For a better discussion of issues and problems, Special Committees are recommended by the plenary of the Children’s Parliament, which may include the following: 1. Legislative Control Committee, 2. Education Committee, 3. Health and Environment Committee, 4. Cultural Committee, 5. Press and Communication Committee. The PCCPWC is responsible for safeguarding the adoption and implementation of the views and suggestions of the Children’s Parliament.

In the statute, it is stated that the PCCPWC is responsible for finding funding for the efficient operation of the institution. However, it does not state the sources and means. There are discussions for supporting the institution by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth.

2. The "Youth Parliament" programme

According to the official [brochure](#) of the programme, the "Youth Parliament" is an educational programme organized for the first time by the Greek Parliament in the 1995-1996 school year and since then, it has been running on an annual basis in the Hellenic Parliament in Athens. It has been achieved due to the collaboration between the Greek Parliament and the Ministries of Education in Cyprus and Greece.

The program is addressed to students of grades A and B of Lyceum (Upper Secondary Education) of the schools of Greece, Cyprus, and Greek diaspora. The [European Youth Portal](#) also mentions that in order to take part in this program, students must answer two questions (50-150 words each) and their answers will be sent electronically to the evaluation committee in Greece. If their answers are assessed as excellent, then they have the right to take part in the draw, where 300 youth parliament members will be finally elected randomly for participating to the "Youth Parliament" (260 students from Greece, 20 from Cyprus and 20 from emigrant Hellenic). Only students who have not reached the 21st year can take part.

The program aims to pursue the involvement of youth in "citizenship". By actively participating in discussions that concern important issues of their country, youth become more active, responsible and politicized citizens. On the official [Youth parliament programme](#), it is stated that different topics are being discussed each year. For example, during the latest "Youth Parliament", students discussed about the active citizen in relation to democratic school, human rights, culture, social solidarity, digital age and the environment. Although it is an educational programme, it is worth noting that Members of the Greek and Cypriot Parliament ask for information on what has been discussed during the work of the "Youth Parliament".

There is no information available regarding the sources of funding for the operation of this programme.

3. The "House of Young Representatives"

The House of Young Representatives is an annual initiative organized for the first time in 2016 by the Cyprus Youth Council (CYC) and the youth NGO Cyprus Youth DiplomaCY. It is a three-day event where young people from all over Cyprus conduct a simulation of the House of Representatives of the Republic and the House of Young Representatives will convene to "legislate" in a special way through the adoption of parliamentary committee reports that will be simulated.

All young people in Cyprus, aged 16-30, are invited to participate in the event. No other specific criteria are set regarding participation. There is an online participation form and the two responsible organizations undertake the selection of the 56 participants.

Role and responsibilities: The overall aim is for the "House of Young Representatives", as it is stated in the [Cyprus Youth Council dedicated website](#), to become an institution in Cyprus so as to give permanent space to young people to express their views on everything that concerns them, both at the political level and at the decision-making level. The

participants are divided into 5 Parliamentary Groups (Foreign and European Affairs Committee, Committee on Employment, Committee on Home Affairs, Education Committee, Environment Committee). Each Parliamentary Committee discusses a subject and draft a report on the subject to be discussed and voted in plenary. If the report is approved, it will be handed over to the respective Ministers (of the real Government) and other technocrats, with the mandate to take the report into account and include it in the responsibilities of each Ministry.

The programme is funded by the Youth Board of Cyprus.

Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

1. Cyprus Youth Council

The Cyprus Youth Council (CYC) was founded in 1996 as a voluntary, non – governmental, non – profit organization. It aims at promoting dialogue and cooperation between youth in Cyprus and connecting them with youth in Europe and globally. The CYC seeks to act as a platform of exchange and communication between all youth NGOs in Cyprus and is in continuous cooperation with the European Youth Forum. It has over 60 member-organizations (both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot organizations, political youth parties and non-political youth organizations). CYC is not part of the country's constitutional structure but it acts on national level.

The General Assembly is the supreme body of the CYC. The General Assembly meets with decision of the Secretariat once a year with the participation of representatives of all Member Organizations of CYC. The General Assembly deals with the subjects set in the agenda, such as Activity Reports, Financial Reports, Discussion of issues that affect young people, Setting the general framework for the CYC, Presence and participation of the Council in a local and an international level and decision making and drafting of resolutions.

The Secretariat is comprised of 9 members. The members of the Secretariat are elected within candidacies which are submitted by the Full Member-organizations of the CYC for a two-year term. As regards the positions at the Secretariat, except the position of the President, 4 Political Parties' and 4 Non-Political Parties' Youth Organizations shall be elected. The Secretariat executes the provisions of the Articles of Association and the decisions taken at the General Assembly and has the obligation to keep the members-organizations informed in relation to issues of common interest. The meetings of the Secretariat are regular. Last, the Financial Control Committee is comprised of three members from Full Member-organizations are elected at the General Assembly for a period of two years starting from the date of election and have the right to vote. The age range of the CYC's members and its various bodies varies between 18 to 40 years old.

The CYC organises events, seminars, workshops and activities that provide the necessary space for its members to exchange good practices, interests and experience on any youth related topic. The CYC also acts as a platform for its members for participating in European projects. The CYC is also the main stakeholder in the Structured Dialogue that seeks to promote the political participation of all Cyprus youth. Areas of interest, always in relation to youth, include human rights and equality, employment and social issues, active citizenship and life-long learning, non-formal education and youth policies. Moreover, the CYC voices the concerns of youth NGOs including lobbying to policy makers for a number of youth related issues (e.g. youth unemployment, validation of non-formal education, etc.).

The CYC receives funding from various sources (national funding coming from the Youth Board of Cyprus and European programmes).

2. Municipal/Community Youth Councils

The Municipal/Community Youth Councils began in Cyprus in late 2001- early 2002, with the support of the Local Authorities and Youth Board of Cyprus (YBC). Today there are 23 Municipal and 3 Community Youth Councils established. The role of the YBC is to support

and help the Municipal/Youth Councils in regard to any action or issue that benefit young people. This help and support to the Local Authority and the Municipal/Community Youth Councils can be financial, technical and advisory for activities, programs or even infrastructure projects that could be developed.

Each Municipal/Community Youth Council follows the statutes and operating regulations set by the Youth Board of Cyprus in collaboration with the local authority. The chairman of the Council is always a member of the Municipal/Community Council. Two-three more members of the Municipal/Community Council can participate and the rest (depending on the number of members decided by the local authority) are young people coming from local youth NGO's. If the candidates are more than the set number of members then elections are taking place.

The role of the Municipal/Community Youth Councils is to advise the Municipality and Community Authorities. The Municipality and Community Youth Councils prepare an annual action plan, addressed to youth people, including a financial budget. Similarly, they recommend solution-policies in regard to problems that young people face in relation to the Local Authority. Further, they can recommend the implementation of infrastructure projects, programs and actions for the benefit of young people of each Municipality and Community.

The Local Authorities support financially the Municipal/Community Youth Councils. Specific programs and activities can also be sponsored by the YBC through the "[Youth Initiatives Project](#)". It is also possible for the Municipal/Community Youth Councils to receive financial help from the private sector in the form of grants for a specific program or activity.

Higher education student union(s)

Pancyprian Federation of Student Unions (POFEN)

The Pancyprian Federation of Student Unions is a recognized social partner in Cyprus which was established in 1973. The supreme body of the Federation is the Congress. For the period between two congresses, the highest governing body is the Administrative Committee. The executive board of the Administrative Committee is the Secretariat. There are regular and exceptional congresses. The Regular Congress meets once a year. The Congress is made up of all student unions-members of the Federation represented by regular and alternate representatives.

POFEN has 18 member-organizations. The Secretariat has eleven members (President, Vice President, General Secretary, Treasurer, and five other members) and it is also made up of the representatives of student unions-members. All Student Associations are represented by at least one member of the Secretariat. The Secretariat is elected for one-year term until the next regular Congress. The voting system follows a certain regulation depending on the number of members each student union has. The frequency of the meetings of the Secretariat is regular.

The objectives of the Federation include supporting, promoting and enforcing the rights and interests of Cypriot students in any legitimate means available to the Federation through the participation and representation in committees and bodies dealing with student and other academic issues, and in the bodies of all Higher and Tertiary Education institutions. The role of the Federation is very important in Cyprus as it influences the decision-making on student issues.

The regular resources of the Federation are the registration fees of each student member-organization, the annual membership fees which vary for each member-organization and funding from the Youth Board of Cyprus. In addition, there are exceptional resources which may be donations, bequests, fundraisers, contributions and any other income that Federation received.

School student union(s)

Pancyprian Student Coordination Committee (P.S.E.M)

PSEM's regulations are included in the general regulations of the secondary public schools' operation of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth. Its Secretariat has 10 members-representatives (President, Vice President, General Secretary, Treasurer, and six more members).

The composition of PSEM follows the following order. In each public secondary school, each class votes (secret ballot) for its 5-member student council. All the student councils of each school vote (secret ballot) for a seven-member Central Student Council which is consisted of the President, Vice President, General Secretary, Treasurer, and three more members. The seven members of the Central Student Council of each school vote (secret ballot again) for two members which are going to represent their school in the Regional Student Coordination Committee. Then, two members from the Secretariat of each Regional Student Coordination Committee constitute the Pancyprian Student Coordination Committee. The Secretariat of PSEM changes every year based on the representatives elected from the above-mentioned processes and its regular meetings take place every two months.

The objectives of PSEM is to safeguard the rights of school students in Education as well as their representation in the decision-making processes related to school reforms and other educational policies and matters.

PSEM receives funding from the Youth Board of Cyprus.

Other bodies

There are no other bodies in Cyprus that are important forums or assemblies of youth representation.

5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

1. The top-level authorities in Cyprus involve young people in the formulation of policies in the following ways: The [Youth Board Law](#) includes legal provisions and guidelines on youth consultation. In particular, the law contains the establishment of Advisory Bodies and clearly says that the Council should seek and take seriously into consideration the recommendations made by the Advisory Bodies on matters that it examines and fall under its jurisdiction. The Advisory Body is there to express views and submit suggestions regarding general principles of youth policy. Taking into consideration that the Youth Board of Cyprus shall advise, through the Minister of Education and Culture, the Council of Ministers about the configuration of a comprehensive and specialized policy on youth matters", this consultation mechanism is across all policy areas directly influencing the situation of young people.

In this way, young people are officially consulted by the Youth Board of Cyprus and the rest of the top-level institutions on a national level for the formulation of policies in youth field.

The Advisory Body can meet (face to face) whenever the Chairman of the Council deems it necessary, but he is also obliged to convene a meeting if there is a written request by the majority of the members.

2. Municipal/Community Youth Councils through which young people are consulted on local level (go to the [section 5.3](#) for further information on the Municipal/Community Youth Councils).
3. The [Office of the Commissioner of Volunteerism and NGOs](#) has introduced the "Day for public consultation" (Ημέρα Δημόσιας Διαβούλευσης). As explained in the [Annual](#)

[Report 2018](#) of the office of the Commissioner, this is a pioneer initiative approved by the Council of Ministers and is repeated on a regular basis. The Republic of Cyprus and the State Officials, consult with civil society on issues that they care and concern them. The initiative does not target solely young people, but the citizens in general. The results of the consultations are given to the Government officials who are asked to take them into account before taking any decision.

Actors

There are different types of actors involved in the mechanisms of consultation, as well as on the actual levels of youth participation.

1. For example, the Advisory Body is consisted of the following committees:
 - a. the Political Committee which includes representatives of each youth organization of the parties which have a parliamentary group and which are nominated by the corresponding organizations;
 - b. the Trade Union Body which includes labour, rural and scientific youth organizations as well as student federations and organizations operating on an island-wide basis and with proven activity;
 - c. the Students Committee which includes two representatives of each student federation or organization operating on an island-wide basis and with proven activity, as well as the school organizations, nominated by the body they represent.

All committees of the Advisory Body are chaired by the president of the Council of the Youth Board of Cyprus, they top level public authority for youth. There are no other stakeholders involved. The Youth Board of Cyprus did not take any measures in order to encourage the participation of specific target groups.

2. Regarding the Municipal/Community Youth Councils, the main actors are mentioned in the [section 5.3](#).
3. The actors involved in the "Day for public consultation" are students, organized groups, unorganized citizens and others, depending on the target group and topic addressed. The participation of specific target groups depends on the topic of the consultation, however, the Office of the Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGOs did not take any proactive measures in order to encourage the participation of specific groups in all consultations. The public authorities represented in this consultation process vary, depending on the topic of the consultation. Some examples of state officials taking part in previous consultations are Ministries, the Human Resource Development Authority, the Cities Union and the Cyprus Sports Organization. Additional stakeholders may also participate, but again they depend on the topic of the consultations. Some examples of additional stakeholders involved in previous consultations are: state and private universities, private sector companies.

Information on the extent of youth participation

Public authorities collect data on young people's participation in the consultation processes.

1. The Youth Board of Cyprus has a database with the number of representatives of the Advisory Body. The members of the Advisory body are chosen from the beginning of the mandate and remain the same throughout all consultation processes.
2. The Municipal/Local Youth Council have again a database with the number of representatives. The members of the Local Youth Council are chosen from the beginning of the mandate and remain the same throughout all consultation processes.

3. The Office of the Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGOs keeps data about the participation of citizens through a list. However, it is not available if the Commissioner keeps record of the age of the participants.

Outcomes

1. The Youth Board of Cyprus usually requests input from the Advisory Body when it comes to policy issues, such as defining goals and objectives. As an outcome, their opinions are integrated into policy document prepared by the Youth Board of Cyprus. An example of such work was the [National Youth Strategy of Cyprus](#). The National Youth Strategy is publicly available.
2. The type of input requested from the Municipal/Local Youth Councils is an annual action plan addressed to youth people, including a financial budget and recommendations for solutions and policies in regard to problems that young people face in relation to the Local Authority. It is not available if the Municipal/Local authorities make public the final outcomes.
3. The Office of the Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGOs usually requests input regarding recommendations and suggestions for new policies or measures the government should make. The outcomes of this consultation are publicly available in the annual reports of the Commissioner.

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

The biggest large-scale initiative that exist for young people for participating in dialogues or debates with public authorities responsible for policy-making is the National Youth Conference. The National Youth Conference is regularly organized by the Youth Board of Cyprus and it targets young people from NGOs, informal youth groups, pupils, students and any other young people aged between 14-35 years old. The Conferences usually happen under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Cyprus and they engage into consultations young people and state officials/stakeholders. The aim of the Conference is to hear young people's thoughts and views, expectations and concerns about tomorrow. Each Conference has a different topic and its main outcome is a policy paper which is then given to the state officials for taking it into consideration when making any decision.

The Youth Board of Cyprus made the Conference accessible to all young people, arranging buses from rural areas to come to the conference and offering a permission for students and soldiers in order to attend it. Moreover, the Youth Board encouraged the participation of Turkish Cypriots whose transportation to the venue was again arranged.

5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

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 Cyprus however, the National Youth Strategy (more information about it is covered in the [first chapter](#)) contains a whole action field dedicated to youth participation.

Scope and contents

The Objectives of the National Youth Strategy, for youth participation, are:

- 1: Assurance of youth participation in all decision-making stages for shaping policies that reflect the needs and views of the young people;
- 2: Empowerment of youth for active participation in democratic life.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

The Youth Board of Cyprus is responsible for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy. However, all public services dealing with youth are responsible for implementing actions under the National Youth Strategy according to their field of competence. For more details on the mechanism of the Strategy can be found in [Chapter 1](#).

Revisions/Updates

There has not been any revision of the Strategy yet. All updates can be found in [Chapter 1](#).

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

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

There is not a specific legal or policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations in Cyprus. The youth organizations function in the framework of the “[Associations and Foundations Law](#)”. Its main goal is to define the term “association” and “foundation” and to give guidelines about their registration and their function.

Public financial support

Youth organizations may receive financial support through the [Youth Initiatives Project](#). The “Youth Initiatives Project” is offered by the Youth Board of Cyprus and refers to grant activities established by young people and organised youth organisations. The source of Youth Initiatives Project is solely national and it is not earmarked within a particular national programme, grant programmes for youth organisations, or support coming from European funds.

The Youth Initiatives Project supports several activities such as conferences, workshops, cultural activities (concerts, art expositions, creation of CD/short film/documentary, book publishing, buying books for library, printing manuals), social intervention projects, sports activities, excursions, festivals, campaigns, and furniture and equipment supplies for youth NGOs. Especially with the last one (furniture and equipment) youth organizations can improve their youth facilities.

Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

There are not specific national or 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

Policy Framework

There is not a specific national strategy which applies to social and civic competences and their development.

Formal learning

Social and civic competences are incorporated in curricula for general and vocational education at upper secondary level. The citizenship education is not a separate subject. Instead it is integrated into the subjects of Greek Language (1st, 2nd and 3rd class of upper secondary education) and History (2nd and 3rd class of upper secondary education). As mentioned in the [curriculum of Greek Language](#) and the [curriculum of History](#) the main learning objectives of the citizenship education are cultivating values, adopting attitudes and demonstrating behaviors that make up the modern democratic civilization. By

teaching the lesson, students are encouraged to become responsible and active citizens capable of helping reconcile and foster mutual trust among people and promote fundamental values such as democracy and freedom.

Non-formal and informal learning

Participative structures within formal education settings (e.g. pupils' participation in school councils)

A [newsletter of the official newspaper of the Republic of Cyprus](#) describes the regulations of upper secondary schools in the current school year. The regulations require pupils'/students' participation in decision-making in their educational institution. More specifically, each class is entitled to elect a class council with 5 members who then elect the school students council.

There are not any top-level or large-scale programmes aimed at training school staff and pupils to enhance their skills to participate in decision-making structures.

Partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers

There is not a policy/legal framework for partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers.

There also no public funds available to support the formation of such partnerships.

Supporting non-formal learning initiatives focusing on social and civic competences

There are no national/top-level programmes establishing, encouraging or supporting education projects related to the promotion of civic and social competences.

Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning

There are no existing system of quality assurance of non-formal learning activities/projects.

Educators' support

The Office of the Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGOs supports the educators training to the development of social and civic competences through the "[Teacher's manual for cultivating volunteering and active citizenship in schools](#)". This manual outlines key concepts and definitions and suggests concrete sessions or campaigns that can be done at school.

5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

Information providers / counselling structures

There are two public authorities responsible for disseminating information about democratic rights and democratic values for young people;

- (a) the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) and
- (b) the [Office of the Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGOs](#)

Young people can have access to information via the [Youth Information Centres](#) and their social media pages, as well as the [European Youth Portal](#) of the European Commission which is powered by [Eurodesk](#).

There is not a framework for youth information and counselling structures in Cyprus besides the standards set by the [European Youth Information and Counselling Agency](#) (ERYICA) and the [Eurodesk Brussels Link](#) which is funded by the EU. These youth

information and counselling services receive public financial support from the Republic of Cyprus and they are both operated by the Youth Board of Cyprus.

Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

There are no large-scale, youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and/or democratic values.

Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

The Youth Initiatives Project (see [section 5.6 on Public Financial Support](#)) dedicates a whole action for bi-communal activities which promote the dialogue between young people coming from the Turkish-Cypriot community and the Greek-Cypriot community.

Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

There are no policy frameworks or guidelines on transparent public communication targeting young people in Cyprus.

There are no national or large-scale programmes or initiatives on providing training for policy-makers at various levels on suitable and youth-tailored communication.

5.9 E-participation

The Youth Board of Cyprus encourages young people to participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of the National Youth Strategy through e-consultation processes that take place via the platform [Opin](#). The platform resulted from a European-wide research project, the EUth that was funded by the European Commission (Horizon 2020). Eleven project partners from eight different countries have developed an open and easy-to-use online participation platform along with different mobile tools and apps for smartphones and tablets. This way, young people can get involved whenever and wherever they wish with minimum effort. The aim of the project and thus the platform, is to get more young people involved in political decision-making and increase youth trust in political institutions.

There are not any national data or studies treating the relationship between e-participation and youth political engagement.

5.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

The Parliamentary Committee on Educational Affairs and Culture is also discussing now (October 2017) the inclusion of citizenship education as a separate subject for lower and upper secondary schools. The discussion concerns also the academic qualifications of the tutors.

Ongoing debates

The ongoing debate in the country is about the youth participation in democratic life, especially in elections. This topic concerns mostly the politicians as well as key stakeholders like the Youth Board of Cyprus.

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education in Cyprus is compulsory up to the age of 15 and free of charge. The country remains below the EU average (10.6 %) and the Europe 2020 national target of 10% regarding early school leaving and there are several initiatives to downsize the phenomenon (see [section 6.3](#)).

The responsible body for setting education policy in Cyprus is the [Council of Ministers](#). However, the overall responsibility for policy implementation, educational planning and service delivery rests with the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#). In addition, the Youth Board of Cyprus is the responsible body (with an advisory role to the Ministry) regarding the identification and promotion of youth policies in the field of Education and Training as well as other youth related issues. For more information on the educational context (formal education structure, key actors, etc.) in Cyprus, please see [sections 6.1](#) and [6.2](#).

The [National Youth Strategy 2017-2022](#), which is under development, is a very important policy paper on youth related topics that will define measures and policies in relation to Education and Training, validation of non-formal education, social inclusion of young people to education and many more (see [sections 6.4](#) and [6.5](#)). There are also several ongoing initiatives/programmes to boost innovation skills and media literacy of young people both on formal and non-formal settings, but there is not a specific strategy/action plan for these topics ([section 6.7](#) and [6.8](#)).

6.1 General context

Main trends in young people's participation in education and training

Cyprus remains below the EU average (10.6 %) and the Europe 2020 national target of 10% regarding early school leaving. The [Education and Training MONITOR 2018 Cyprus Report](#) states that early school leaving rose in 2017. At 8.6 %, the share of early leavers from education and training aged 18-24 went up by 1 percentage point between 2016 and 2017. However, according to the [Cyprus National Reform Programme 2018](#), the rate of dropped-out students remains low, at 0,2% for upper secondary students.

Concerning students' mobility, there are no official data available related to the number of students going abroad for studies for the last years. The latest available data by the [Cyprus Statistical Service](#) (Education Indicators) refer to the academic year 2010/11 where the gross enrolment ratio abroad for tertiary level was 27% (*gross enrolment ratio for a given level of education is derived by dividing the total number of pupils at this level regardless of age, by the population of the age group which according to national regulations should be enrolled at this level*).

In addition, the official data ([Στοιχεία για τα προγράμματα και τις υπηρεσίες του Οργανισμού Νεολαίας για το 2018](#)), provided by the Youth Board of Cyprus (YBC), reported that 3 551 young people participated in the Erasmus+ programme in 2018, out of which 1 612 young people participated in trainings for youth workers and youth exchanges. Moreover, based on similar national statistics of the YBC ([Στοιχεία για το πρόγραμμα Erasmus+: Νεολαία](#)), for the period 2014-2018, 21 948 young people participated in the various activities of the Erasmus+ programme, of which 8 279 participated in youth mobilities and trainings for youth workers, 9 756 participated in transnational cooperation, 3 316 participated in the process of structured dialogue for youth and 597 participated in volunteering activities.

Based on the [Education and Training Monitor 2019 Cyprus Report](#), the main challenges in young people's participation in education and training in Cyprus are:

- Tertiary education attainment has risen further, but underutilisation of skills remains a challenge given the specific features of the Cypriot labour market;
- Measures have been taken to upgrade vocational education and training and adult learning, but the attractiveness of both sectors and participation in them remain low;
- While the 2018 school dropout rate was 6.2% for native-born people, it was 13.9% for the foreign-born population. The gender gap increased somewhat, with a higher rate among males than in 2017 (9.9% v 9.4%) and a lower rate among females (6% v 7.7%);
- Digital skills need to be further strengthened. Individuals with above-basic digital skills are fewer in Cyprus (22%) than across the EU (36%);
- No policy guidance exists for providing post-secondary education for young migrant adults, even though the proportion of recently arrived refugees aged 18-34 is especially high at 62%.
- As for the validation of skills, the [Country Sheet on Youth Work in Cyprus](#) (June 2018) mentions that in the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020, the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth is in the process of developing a mechanism for validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning (including volunteerism and youth work). At the same time, the Ministry is mapping the current situation in Cyprus regarding the validation of non-formal and informal learning.
- Last, a major topic in the Cyprus Education is the integration of children with a migrant background. Based on the [Ministry of Education and Culture Annual Report 2016](#), economic migrants have been arriving in the country in larger numbers since the accession of Cyprus in the European Union in 2004. For this reason, the Ministry gives great emphasis on ensuring equal access to education for all children living on the island and support their quick integration in the school society. Starting in the school year 2018/2019, the Ministry is running a programme of intensive teaching of the Greek Language in secondary education public schools. During the school year 2015/2016, the programme for the teaching of Greek as a second language was running at 29 schools throughout Cyprus and 376 children with a migrant background attended Greek Language courses.

Organisation of the education and training system

The [Education system in Cyprus](#) consists of the following stages:

Pre-Primary education is compulsory for all children between 4 8/12 – 5 8/12 years old. Children are also accepted over the age of 3.

Primary Education is compulsory for all children over the age of 5 8/12 and has a duration of 6 years.

Secondary Education offers two three-year cycles of education – Gymnasio (lower secondary education which is mandatory) and Lykeio (upper secondary general education which is optional) – to pupils between the ages of 12 and 18. The curriculum includes core lessons, interdisciplinary subjects and a variety of extracurricular activities. Education is compulsory up to the age of 15 and free of charge for both cycles. Upon completion of Lykeio, pupils receive a school leaving certificate (apolyterion), providing access to Institutions of Higher and Tertiary Education in Cyprus or abroad.

Instead of the Lykeio, pupils may choose to attend Upper Secondary Technical and Vocational Education.

Upper Secondary Technical and Vocational Education offers a wide range of technical and vocational initial training and lifelong training programmes to eligible gymnasium leavers and adults. Formal mainstream upper secondary initial technical and vocational education programmes are offered at technical schools free of charge. They are offered in two directions, the theoretical and the practical direction. Upon completion of secondary

technical and vocational education, pupils receive an apolyterion, which is equivalent to that awarded by lykeio, providing access to the world of work or to Institutions of Higher and Tertiary Education in Cyprus or abroad.

Post- secondary non-tertiary education is offered to graduates of secondary education (18+ years old) at the Post- Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training.

Higher Education is offered in public and private institutions.

Adult Education. The institution of Adult Education Centres (AEC) was initially established in 1952, mainly in rural areas. Today it operates in all non-occupied areas of the Republic of Cyprus, offering learning opportunities for further personal, professional and social development to thousands of adults aged 15 and over. The AEC offer a variety of interdisciplinary courses, which focus mainly on the teaching of foreign languages, arts and crafts, cultural programmes, health and other issues of general interest, as well as on the teaching of professional and vocational skills. Furthermore, every year the AEC organise free of charge learning activities for various target groups, such as people with literacy difficulties, people with special needs, enclaved Cypriots, prisoners, soldiers, mentally ill and elderly people. They also offer free of charge Greek language courses to the children of repatriated Cypriots, political refugees and Turkish Cypriots. Moreover, Turkish language courses are offered free of charge to Greek Cypriots.

For more information about the Cypriot educational system, please visit the [Eurydice website](#) or read the [Ministry of Education and Culture Annual Report 2016](#).

Main concepts

The definition of Special Need Education (SNE) in Cyprus has been specified in the Laws Special Education Law 113(1) of 1999 ([Περί Αγωγής και Εκπαίδευσης Παιδιών με Ειδικές Ανάγκες Νόμος του 1999](#)) and 69(I)/2001.

In addition, there is no official [definition](#) of non-formal education in Cyprus. However, the Council of Europe's definition in the Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work is used.

6.2 Administration and governance

Governance

According to the World of Bank 2014 Report "Analysis of the Function and Structure of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus", education governance in Cyprus is largely centralized with only a limited amount of decentralization. The main authorities responsible for education are the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, the Educational Service Commission (ESC) ([Επιτροπή Εκπαιδευτικής Υπηρεσίας](#)), and the Local school boards ([Σχολικές Εφορίες](#)).

The Council of Ministers sets education policy. The overall responsibility for policy implementation, educational planning and service delivery rests with the Ministry, except for some cases. The ESC manages the appointment, promotion, secondment, and retirement of educators and the appointment of head teachers and inspectors.

The [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#) is organized into 14 departments. The most important structures that are under the Ministry or work closely with it are:

- The [Department of Primary Education](#) administers pre-primary and primary education.
- The [Department of Secondary General Education](#) administers general secondary education.
- The [Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education](#) has the responsibility of technical and vocational education.

- The [Tertiary and Higher Education Department](#) administers tertiary and higher education.
- The [Cyprus Pedagogical Institute](#) is also a department of the MOEC and is responsible for the in-service training of teachers and for curriculum support.

The [Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation](#) is responsible for the promotion and establishment of research in education related issues (educational policy, curricula, textbooks, training).

For more information, you can also visit the relevant Eurydice website under the section [Cyprus Education Organisation and Governance](#).

In addition, the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) (YBC) is an important entity regarding the identification and promotion of youth policies in the field of Education and Training as well as other youth related issues. The YBC, as an advisory body, submits through the Minister of Education and Culture to the Council of Ministers suggestions regarding the development of a comprehensive and specialized youth policy for the promotion of the progress and prosperity of all young people in Cyprus and for providing opportunities to all young people.

As regards to regional/local authorities, Cyprus is divided into six administrative districts, Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca, Ammochostos, Pafos and Kyrenia. District authorities have no responsibility either in policy-making in education, educational planning or the establishment and operation of schools. However, there are Local School Boards which are established in municipalities, villages or neighbouring communities where schools operate. Local school boards are public entities charged with some financial management and infrastructure management of school buildings, including recruitment and management of teacher assistants to help with special needs children, hiring school support staff (such as cleaners and guards), purchasing and delivering stationery, distributing learning materials, and liaising with the Ministry's Technical Services for larger repairs and school maintenance. Therefore, they act as an intermediary administrative and supply station between the Ministry and the schools.

For more information, please visit the Eurydice website under the section [Administration and Governance at Local and/or Institutional Level](#) in Cyprus.

The Human Resource Development Authority ([Αρχή Ανάπτυξης Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού](#)) plays also an important role in vocational training not only for young people, but for the general population in Cyprus. The HRDA is a semi-government organisation whose mission is to create the necessary prerequisites for the planned and systematic training and development of the human resources of Cyprus. For more information, please read the [2016 Annual Report](#) of the organisation.

Concerning non-public actors, the trade unions are powerful and always participate in negotiations about teachers' working conditions, remuneration, evaluation and any kind of educational reform at all levels. There are three teachers' unions in Cyprus that are key stakeholders in education:

- POED – Pancyprian Greek Teachers Organisation ([Παγκύπρια Οργάνωση Ελλήνων Δασκάλων](#)) is the union for pre-primary and primary teachers.
- OELMEK – Association of Greek Secondary Education Teachers ([Οργάνωση Ελλήνων Λειτουργών Μέσης Εκπαίδευσης Κύπρου](#)) is the union for secondary general teachers.
- OLTEK – Association of Teachers of Technical Education in Cyprus ([Οργάνωση Λειτουργών Τεχνικής Εκπαίδευσης Κύπρου](#)) is the union for secondary technical and vocational education teachers

In the field of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, the relevant Ministry's Department co-operates on European level with Cedefop and on national level with stakeholders and social partners, including:

- the Committee for the Monitoring of the Upgrading of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education;
- Employers and Manufacturers Associations;
- the Trade Unions and
- the Advisory Body for Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

There is not a specific mechanism of cross-sectorial cooperation between Ministries, Departments, Agencies involved in defining policies and measures on education and training for young people. However, the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth Annual Report 2017](#) states that the [European and International Affairs Office \(EIAO\)](#) [in Greek, Γραφείο Ευρωπαϊκών και Διεθνών Υποθέσεων (ΓΕΔΥ)] promotes the implementation of the EU and International policies in Cyprus in line with national priorities through coordination of educational committees, technical working groups and other groups of experts. It collaborates closely with all the Departments of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, the Cyprus Sports Organization, the Youth Board of Cyprus, and other Governmental Departments, the Permanent Representation of Cyprus in Brussels, Strasbourg, Geneva and elsewhere, and with the embassies of the Republic of Cyprus abroad.

As for the field of youth, in the [National Youth Strategy 2017-2022 \(Εθνική Στρατηγική για τη Νεολαία 2017-2022\)](#), there is an action field devoted in Education and Training where the coordination of youth priorities and initiatives of all public bodies will be under the responsibility of the Youth Board of Cyprus.

6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

National strategy

There is no special national strategy tackling ELET in Cyprus. However, a special mention of the topic was made in the [National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2014-2020](#) of the Republic of Cyprus. The National LLL Strategy was developed by the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development (DG EPCD) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI), the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) and the Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC) and was approved by the Council of Ministers in June 2014. The Strategy targets all age groups of the Cypriot population.

More specifically, in the 2nd priority axis of the Strategy named "Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training", it is stated, among others, that "the measures to be implemented under this axis will aim, inter alia, to ensure the acquisition of basic skills and competencies by all citizens and reducing early school leaving". In addition, in the 3rd priority axis, there is also a reference to the conduct of surveys and studies for i) evaluating the effectiveness of actions related to early school leaving (ESL) and for ii) identifying positive actions related to ESL in order to upgrade and expand them to more schools.

The responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the LLL Strategy is delegated to: a) the National LLL Committee which has an enlarged composition, comprised of the services and organizations with major involvement in the provision of LLL and the social partners, and b) the Technical LLL Committee which assists the National LLL Committee and is comprised of the representatives of the DG EPCD, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, the MLWSI, the CPC and the HRDA.

In the 2014 Eurydice report "[Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe:- Strategies, Policies and Measures](#)" (see pp. 174-175), a number of other

measures and individual policies are also presented and concern different levels of education (e.g. pre-primary, VET, etc.).

No evidence-based monitoring of the implementation of the specific measure on ELET of the LLL Strategy is available.

Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

The most important initiative implemented at top-level for preventing early school leaving is the "Activities of School and Social Inclusion (DRA.S.E.)" ([Δράσεις Σχολικής και Κοινωνικής Ένταξης](#)). The project aims to support, expand and improve the outcomes of the previous programme against "[Early School Leaving, School Failure and Delinquency in Zones of Educational Priority](#)" (p. 514), which was implemented during the 2007-2013 programming period. Based on the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth [Annual Report 2018](#), for the school year 2017/2018, the project ran in 96 school units and 14.5% of the total pupil population has been benefited by actions provided through the project. The project's objective is to cover 15% of the pupil population by 2020. It is implemented in all levels of education, from pre-primary and primary to lower and upper-secondary education as well as technical schools. The project is 85 % funded by the European Social Fund and it will be into force between 2014-2020.

In the DRA.S.E. project, the following programme actions are being implemented, as they were described in the Ministry of Education and Culture Annual Report 2018.

Provision of morning and afternoon programmes to reinforce pupils and their families learning and creativity:

a) Reinforcing Teaching and Learning during school time

- Pre-primary Schools
- Primary Schools (Greek Language - Mathematics)
- Secondary Schools (Modern Greek - Philology, Greek for bilinguals, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Economics)

b) Creative programmes during school time

- Theatre, Art, Physical Education (Sports / Dance), Home Economics, Musical Instrument, Music

c) Teaching and Creative Programmes during afternoon Time

- Greek language/Modern Greek/Philology, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Computer Science, Theatre, Art, Home Economics, Physical Education (Sports / Dance), Economics, Music Instrument (Guitar / Bouzouki / Piano), Music, Foreign Languages (Arabic, Bulgarian, Russian, Turkish)
- Psychosocial support for pupils and their families through the establishment of "Information and Social-emotional Support Centres"
- Supply of technological school equipment and educational tools/materials
- Seminars and training for teachers

As it was already mentioned in the section 6.1 ([Main trends](#)), there is also the programme (p. 514) of intensive teaching of the Greek Language in secondary education public schools for children with a migrant background. The programme supports both the inclusion of all youngsters and contributes, in long-term, to the prevention of early school leaving.

As for ELVET-specific measures, there is not a specific strategy, but the most important measures that are still in progress are mentioned in the [Eurydice report of 2014](#) (p. 174). Indicatively, the most important are:

- The [New Modern Apprenticeship](#) (NMA) Programme which started its operation in the school year 2012/2013. The NMA provides an alternative pathway for education,

training and development for young people who drop out from the formal education system and is geared towards meeting the needs of the labour market. The NMA embraces young people between 14 and 21 years of age at two apprenticeship levels (preparatory and core). Participation is not compulsory and is free of charge.

- The Evening Technical Schools ([Εσπερινά Σχολεία](#)) are second chance schools that have been established to promote participation in secondary technical and vocational education and to combat early leaving. The Evening Technical schools target any person above 18 years old who, for any reason, has dropout school.

Addressing ELET through non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

There is no policy, programme, project and initiative – either directly organised or funded – by top level authorities aiming at preventing and reducing ELET through non-formal and informal learning.

However, the first 3-year Action Plan for the implementation of the [National Youth Strategy 2017-2022](#) ([Εθνική Στρατηγική για τη Νεολαία 2017-2022](#)) states that non-formal educational activities and classes (such as theatre, sports and arts) are offered to children and teenagers of migrant background in the Reception and Accommodation Centers for Applicants of International Protection so as to support their skills and educational background.

Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions

In regards to the existence of policies/programmes/projects/initiatives supporting multi-agency partnerships between the main categories of professionals working to address early leaving at school and community level, the [Eurydice report of 2014](#) (p. 174) mentions that in Cyprus “the policy areas of employment, social affairs and health are involved in the cooperation on tackling early leaving, but cooperation mechanisms have not yet been established. Multi-agency partnerships at local/institutional level are well established and involve both psychologists and guidance specialists. School heads, teachers, social workers, therapists, speech and language specialists, as well as other necessary specialised staff to help students with specific problems may also be associated within projects. Youth workers may also be involved”.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth Annual Report 2018 ([Ετήσια Έκθεση 2018](#)) (p. 223-224) also mentions that the Coordinating Committee for Health Education and Citizenship ([Συντονιστική Επιτροπή Αγωγής Υγείας και Πολιτότητας](#)) undertakes the coordination of health and citizenship issues in collaboration with all departments and other responsible units of the Ministry that deal with issues that affect the physical, mental and social well-being of students, such as the DRA.S.E. Programme.

As for the project "Activities of School and Social Inclusion (DRA.S.E.)" ([Δράσεις Σχολικής και Κοινωνικής Ένταξης](#)), the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth Annual Report 2018](#) mentions that there will be a programme evaluation which will include:

- Internal Evaluation
 - a) Reports on creative and reinforcement teaching activities. Each educator will prepare an annual report on the creative and / or reinforcing teaching services provided.
 - b) Experts' Reports. Specialists providing psychosocial support will produce quarterly reports on the services provided.
- External Evaluation
 - a) Final Project Evaluation / Project Report by external evaluator.

However, the report does not mention further information concerning the results of the evaluations undertaken the previous years of the programme's implementation.

In an attempt to safeguard young people's continuous participation in education and training, the [Ministry of Labour Welfare and Social Insurance](#) also launched in 2017 the [National Action Plan for Youth Employment](#) which implements the Youth Guarantee Recommendation in Cyprus. It endorses a wide range of actions that aim to reinforce youth employment and activate young people (especially NEETs) as regards available employment schemes, encourage them to register at the [Public Employment Service](#) and provide substantial help in job search, education or training opportunities. Development, monitoring and evaluation is overseen by a cross-sectoral [Working Group](#) which was established for the preparation of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment. This working group includes representatives from all implementing bodies, social partners and youth organisations.

6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

There is no official validation system of youth work and non-formal learning in Cyprus, yet. Several of the objectives of the [National Youth Strategy 2017-2022](#) ([Εθνική Στρατηγική για τη Νεολαία 2017-2022](#)) focus on youth work and non-formal and informal learning (NFL). As this is an ongoing reform, for more information please see section 6.10.

In addition, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports is co-ordinating the establishment of a validation mechanism on non-formal and informal learning in Cyprus.

Information and guidance

Since there is no official validation system of youth work and non-formal learning in Cyprus, there are not any awareness-raising activities by top-level authorities to inform and guide on the topic.

Quality assurance

There is no existing system of quality assurance of the arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal competences in Cyprus. As this is part of an ongoing reform, for more information please see [section 6.10](#).

6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

Policy framework

According to [EU Mobility Scoreboard - Higher education background Report](#), there is no policy framework that defines and sets guiding principles for cross-border learning mobility in Cyprus. Cross-border learning mobility in Higher Education, but also in all levels of education in Cyprus, takes place mainly through the [Erasmus+ Programme](#) and for this reason, mobilities under this framework follow the Erasmus+ Guide.

In regards to [Initial education and training \(IVET\)](#) mobility policy in Cyprus, the relevant [Cedefop website](#) mentions that there is a process for setting up policy targets, but it is limited in coverage and not planned to be expanded. There is a target to involve all technical schools and IVET institutions in Cyprus, in IVET mobility and as many students for long term mobility as possible, but a specific target number has not been set yet.

The responsible national agencies in Cyprus that promote and manage international mobility activities within the Erasmus+ Programme are two. That is, the [Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes](#) responsible for funding opportunities in the field of Education and Training and the Youth Board of Cyprus, responsible for opportunities in the field of non-formal learning and youth work.

Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education

As mentioned above, the main programme for cross-border mobility of students is the Erasmus+ Programme. In both school (primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary) and vocational education as well as higher education, the various mobility opportunities under each sector follow the guidelines, rules and obligations set by the annual Erasmus+ Programme Guide, including aspects of language learning, type of mobility and its respective duration.

As regards information and guidance on cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education, the official [Erasmus+ website](#) in Cyprus (available in Greek, English and Turkish) is a space for all people in Cyprus to explore all available information about different opportunities and calls on School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Higher Education and Adult Education.

For the years 2019-2021, the programme “Chrisoprasino Fillo” (Χρυσοπράσινο Φύλλο) runs between the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Θρησκευμάτων) and the [Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#). It is a transnational cooperation in the field of environment and education which deals with the cooperation of primary schools (only for students of 5th and 6th grades) from Cyprus and Greece. Each programme, as well as the partnerships between the Greek and Cypriot Schools, last for two years. In the first year, exchanges of teachers from the partner schools take place while in the second year, exchanges of students take place.

In addition, the [United States Embassy in Cyprus](#) offers a variety of cross-border mobility programmes for students of various educational levels, from upper-secondary to post-doctoral. More specifically:

- The [Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Programme](#) accepts applications for upper secondary school students. The Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellowship is a fully funded intensive short-term exchange programme, created to foster relationships among young Europeans and Americans to build strong linkages and awareness of shared values. The four-week program enables teenagers, ages 16-18, to explore U.S. foreign policy priorities such as youth engagement, support for democracy and civil society, and economic prosperity. The programs are funded by the U.S. Government and provide a full scholarship for participants, which covers visa, travel, lodging, educational materials, ground transportation expenses and travel insurance.
- The [Fulbright Visiting Scholar Programme](#) provides an opportunity for Cypriot doctoral or equivalent degree holders to lecture, conduct advanced research, or pursue a combined program of lecturing and research at U.S. universities or non-academic institutions. The programme provides to its beneficiaries the round-trip airfare, monthly stipend, health insurance and other various allowances. Grants are awarded for one academic semester, a maximum of 4 months.
- The [Fulbright-Schuman Programme](#) is administered by the Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Belgium and is jointly financed by the U.S. State Department and the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission. The program funds graduate and post-graduate study, research, and lecture proposals in the field of US-EU relations, EU policy, or EU institutions for interested American and EU citizens. Cypriot citizens living and working in Cyprus or within the wider EU are eligible to apply. The awards vary from round-trip travel to grants covering all expenses for an academic year.

Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work

Cross-border mobility of young learners engaged in non-formal education and youth work is not promoted under a unified policy or initiative. The Youth Board of Cyprus organizes

several information days per year targeting schools, young people, youth organisations and other beneficiaries interested in participating the Erasmus+ Programme.

Information about the different mobility opportunities in the context of non-formal learning and youth work are available in the Cyprus official [Erasmus+ website](#) but there is not a specific platform or web portal that gathers all mobility opportunities in the field. The use of the [SALTO-YOUTH platform](#) is very common in Cyprus.

Quality assurance

The only existing system for quality assurance for evaluating cross-border mobility is set under the [Erasmus+ programme](#), both for formal and informal learning.

All cross-border mobility programmes, which are funded by Erasmus+, are required to provide the National Agency with the participants' feedback through the standard reporting procedures of the Programme. The relevant feedback is provided in the form of the so-called "Participants' Reports", which are filled by the participants after the completion of their mobility activities and submitted through the reporting IT tool of the Programme.

As regards evaluation of institutions involved in cross-border mobility programmes, this is mainly based on the information provided through their Final Reports (submitted through the reporting IT Tool of the Programme and including the Participants' Reports) and on the data gathered during primary checks, implemented by the National Agency on a random sample. These checks can take the form of desk checks, on-the spot checks during implementation of the Action and on-the spot checks after completion of the action. Monitoring visits are complementary to the above and are only conducted when necessary.

The ten principles responding to the European Quality Charter for Mobility, which basically consist the guidance for education and training stays abroad, are clearly reflected in the Programme Documentation: The Grant Agreement, the Staff Mobility Agreement for teaching and training, the Learning Agreement and the Quality Commitment. These documents must be signed by all parties involved in a mobility activity, taking place in the context of a cross-border mobility programme. They are signed before the actual mobility takes place and are complementary to the Grant Agreement signed between the beneficiary organisation and the National Agency.

Beneficiary organisations always receive feedback and recommendations on the quality assurance processes they put in place, as a result of the evaluation of their Final Report or the evaluation of evidence provided during primary checks, in the form of official letters. In the case that - after the completion of the Final Report evaluation - the overall management of a project (including quality management) is considered as weak, resulting in low scoring (anything below 50 points out of 100), the National Agency is allowed to reduce the final grant amount, according to pre-defined rules. The main criteria/indicators to assess the overall management, based on the [Guide for experts on quality assessment of Erasmus+ actions](#), are relevance of the project, quality of the project design and implementation, quality of the project team and the cooperation arrangements and impact and dissemination.

6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

Educational support

Special Education

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth [Annual Report 2017](#) states that the inclusion of children with special needs is a matter of major policy for the Ministry. The State is responsible for guarding the rights of children with special needs and is responsible to place those children in the united body of training. Children with special needs are educated in public schools equipped with suitable infrastructure, according to the Laws for Special Education. However, children with severe difficulties are educated in the nine

Special Schools, which are staffed with appropriate personnel (teachers for learning, intellectual, functional and adjustment difficulties, psychologists, speech therapists, nurses, physiotherapists and other specialists, as well as auxiliary staff), in order to provide high quality therapy, education and support. The whole public budget of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth for Special Education in 2018 was € 7 416 941.

The Report also mentions that in secondary education, regular subject teachers provide support for children with special needs. A series of seminars (Επιμορφωτικές δράσεις για Εκπαιδευτικούς σε θέματα Ειδικής Αγωγής στη γενική Τάξη και Διάλεξη για Γονείς) regarding special education is developed to assist all teachers with this task. All teachers are encouraged to attend courses of professional development (Προγράμματα – Σεμινάρια) run by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute. Attendance at in-service seminars is compulsory whilst attendance at local seminars is encouraged. Attendance of courses of continuing professional development is considered, in determining teachers' performance during their appraisal. A series of pedagogical discussions - meetings are being held in order to help the classroom teachers, the counsellors and the liaison officers in each school to deal with pupils with special needs in the best possible way. Educational psychologists, university teachers and other specialists are called by the Secondary Education Directory to carry out these professional meetings.

As the majority of children with special needs attend mainstream schools, those in the special education schools present the greatest learning difficulties. Hence, the curricula (Ειδική Εκπαίδευση – Εκπαιδευτικό Υλικό) of such schools contain a major element of skills development in the areas of self-help and independence skills, social and emotional interaction, recreation and communication as well as vocational training. Where a child is able to follow elements of the mainstream curriculum, this is provided for. The content of the curriculum, the subjects taught, and the period of provision are decided by the individual school. There is no element of compulsory or optional curriculum. A pupil will study what he/she is able to.

For more information regarding Special Education in Cyprus, please visit the relevant section in the [Eurydice website \(Chapter 12\)](#) and the [European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education](#).

Support measures for integrating migrant (including refugee) children

The [Education and Training Monitor Report 2018](#) mentions that there are five priorities which guide actions and programmes in this field: 1. learning the Greek language 2. reception of newly arrived children with a migrant background 3. teacher education and continuing professional development 4. collection and analysis of data on the needs of pupils with migrant background 5. intercultural approach through the new curricula.

Most refugee children follow general education. Support for their educational integration has come in particular from the DRA.S.E. programme (Δράσεις Σχολικής και Κοινωνικής Ένταξης) that, among others, aims to support non-Greek speaking families to learn Greek and improve their social skills. For more information about the DRA.S.E. programme, see also [section 6.3](#).

Counselling and Career Guidance for NEETs

The [Ministry of Education and Culture Annual Report 2018](#) mentions that the aim of the project (Συμβουλευτική και επαγγελματική καθοδήγηση σε άτομα 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET)) is to enhance Career Guidance and Counselling Services for young people aged 15-29 who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). The project falls under the framework of the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#) and the [Council Recommendation of April 22, 2013](#) for establishing guarantees for young people. During delivery of the project individual career guidance and counselling will be delivered to young people aged 15-29 who are NEETs. The proposed services comprise 12 000 counselling sessions with young NEETs and at least 3 000 assessment papers/career guidance

questionnaires throughout Cyprus. The beneficiaries, as prescribed in the Ministry's proposal, will be 4 000 NEETs aged 15-29.

Social cohesion and equal opportunities

School subjects – Curriculum

In Primary Education, the school subject of Health Education ([Αγωγή Υγείας](#)) covers, among others, topics such as how to deal with social violence, anti-racism, being aware of your rights and obligations as well as accept and respect diversity and multiculturalism.

Topics related to social cohesion and equal opportunities are also included in the subject of Home Economics ([Οικιακή Οικονομία](#)) at lower and upper-secondary education level. Based on the Ministry of Education and Culture Annual Report 2017, activities that took place during the instruction included, among others, the organisation of workshops and activities for pupils regarding:

- ways to deal with emotional issues, such as emotions of "anger" and "stress";
- conflict resolution;
- emotional health status and life values, such as responsibility, offer and respect;
- bullying;
- the promotion of acceptance;
- management of diversity and multiculturalism.

In addition, the continuing professional development (CPD) seminars ([Προγράμματα – Σεμινάρια](#)) for secondary education teachers offered by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute in 2016/17 address issues such as cultivating empathy, applying anti-racist policies in schools, human relations and crisis management, human rights education, integration of migrant students in schools, developing empathy skills and respect for diversity. Specific information about seminars related to diversity, intercultural education and the Anti-racism policy that are organised by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute can be found on the [website](#) of the Institute.

Programmes/projects/initiatives

During the school year, 2017/2018, all schools, at all levels of education, were required to implement the anti-racist policy of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth named "Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents" ([Κώδικας Συμπεριφοράς κατά του Ρατσισμού & Οδηγός Διαχείρισης και Καταγραφής Ρατσιστικών Περιστατικών](#)). Based on the Ministry's Annual Report 2018, the policy conceptualizes racism in a broad manner, including all sorts of discrimination. It includes definitions of basic concepts which form the theoretical background (e.g. racism, racist incident, discrimination, stereotypes, diversity, and so on.), outlines the responsibilities and commitments expected by each member of the school community, and provides the steps to be followed by schools in order to deal with racist incidents in a practical manner. It provides schools and teachers with a detailed plan on how to deal with and prevent racist incidents.

One of the most important initiatives in Cyprus which promote equal opportunities for everyone in the island are also the [State Institutes for Further Education](#) launched by the Ministry. The State Institutes function under the auspices of Secondary Education all over Cyprus and they aim at offering equal opportunities of education to thousands of pupils of all ages and adults and promoting lifelong learning. They help low income families and offer scholarships to pupils who excel in their Examinations. They employ mostly young unemployed teachers and very few experienced teachers, if necessary. There are 41 State Institutes all over Cyprus with more than 12 500 pupils every year, and they are addressed not only to young people, but to the whole population in Cyprus. In an attempt to provide equal opportunities through education to all citizens, a wide variety of lessons is offered at the State Institutes for Further Education, such as:

- Languages (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Turkish) up to level B1 or B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
- Greek to non-native Greek speakers
- Accounting at all levels
- Remedial lessons for Gymnasium and Lyceum pupils
- ICT

Since 2003, the State Institutes for Further Education have been offering free Greek lessons for the Turkish Cypriots and free Turkish lessons for the Greek Cypriots in an attempt to create communication bridges between the Greeks and the Turks.

In addition, as mentioned in [section 6.3](#), another programme which aims to support the Cypriot population living below the poverty line or being at risk of poverty and social exclusion and it aims to strengthen social cohesion by reducing the risk of social marginalization and exclusion, is the DRA.S.E. programme ([Δράσεις Σχολικής και Κοινωνικής Ένταξης](#)) offered by the Ministry of Education.

As for other initiatives organised in the context of non-formal and informal learning, the Youth Board of Cyprus organised between July and December 2018 the Erasmus+ "[Role Model Network](#)" European initiative, which aims to promote common European values, such as democracy, solidarity and respect for human rights, by promoting the life and action of specific human models (Role Models) that help in the promotion of an inclusive society. The "Network of Role Models" initiative is implemented in Cyprus through the [#LifeStories initiative](#), which aims to inspire and empower young people by presenting the lives of people who have succeeded in their lives, despite the discrimination or challenges they have faced, or people whose work has animated people of immigrant background.

In addition, another inclusive programme in Cyprus in the context of non-formal, informal learning and youth work is the "[Youth Initiatives Project](#)" of the Youth Board of Cyprus aiming to grant activities organised by young people and youth organisations so that young people can have an active role in cultural, sport, political and social activities in Cyprus. For more information, please also visit [section 4.7](#).

6.7 Skills for innovation

Innovation in formal education

Formal education

Based on the Ministry of Education and Culture Annual Report 2017, the curriculum of the school subject Design and Technology was redesigned in 2016 to adhere to the principle that technology literate and competent pupils ought to possess a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes. The Design and Technology is taught at [primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary level](#). The revised Design and Technology curriculum was designed based on the following subject areas: Design, Making, Evaluation, and Technological knowledge. One of the latest developed and most innovative areas of the Design and Technology curriculum concerns Control Systems and Robotics. With the introduction of robotics in the schools, students learn through playing while developing both cognitive and social-emotional skills. In addition, they acquire core skills of the 21st-century, such as problem solving, innovation, project management, creativity, critical thinking, etc.

The Design and Technology Advisors offer several training courses to in-service teachers ([Εκπαιδευτικοί Δημοτικής και Μέσης Γενικής](#)) and to potential teachers ([Πρόγραμμα Επιμόρφωσης Υποψήφιων Καθηγητών Σχεδιασμού και Τεχνολογίας](#)), they provide on-site support at schools and have developed relevant supportive teaching material that can be found in the following links:

- Primary Education supportive materials ([Διδακτικό Υλικό](#), [Υποστηρικτικό Υλικό](#) & [Διδακτικά Μέσα](#))
- Secondary Education supportive materials ([Διδακτικό Υλικό](#) & [Υποστηρικτικό Υλικό](#)).

In addition, as it is reported in the [Innovation in VET - Cyprus Report 2014](#), the [Smart Specialisation Strategy](#) for Cyprus was approved by the Council of Ministers in March 2015. Its goal is to boost innovation with the aim to achieve economic growth and prosperity. The strategy identifies priority sectors (e.g. Energy, Tourism, the Structured Environment/Construction Industry, Transport/Marine, etc.) that are expected to contribute significantly to economic growth, while it refers to the value of VET and includes it in several actions. Policies have started to be implemented in Cyprus to support learners of secondary technical and vocational education (STVE) in acquiring skills needed for creativity and innovation, which are an integral part of entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship components, such as the acquisition of career management skills and practical training in industry are also included in the revised STVE curricula.

Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

The promotion of innovation is of major importance in the [National Youth Strategy 2017-2022](#) ([Εθνική Στρατηγική για τη Νεολαία 2017-2022](#)) of the Youth Board of Cyprus. Under the action field of Education and Training, two priorities are devoted to the development of innovation, creativity and innovative methods of teaching for young people. In addition, the YBC has introduced over the last years a number of initiatives for boosting innovation and related skills to all young people in the island. The most important are:

Youth Leadership Academy ([Καλοκαιρινή Σχολή Ηγεσίας και Δημιουργικότητας](#))

The YBC organised for 3 consecutive years the Summer Youth Leadership Academy with the attendance of young people aged 19-30 from all over Cyprus. The Academy's aim was to empower young people who have a vision in positive change and social progress. Young participants were introduced to creative ways of thinking and to ways to develop and exhibit leadership skills in order to put their innovative ideas in action. Experienced trainers and facilitators helped the participants develop their skills and acquire new knowledge and experiences. The 2019 budget for the Youth Leadership Academy is under the budget of the STEAMers programme, which is €265 000, based on the Cyprus Government Gazette ([Ο περί Προϋπολογισμού του Οργανισμού Νεολαίας του 2019 Νόμος του 2019](#)).

Youth Awards ([Βραβεία Νεολαίας](#))

The Youth Board of Cyprus organised the "Youth Awards" aiming at promoting and rewarding young people who have accomplished a remarkable work in their field. The "Youth Awards" honoured young people who were distinguished through specific actions/initiative/work or achievement in various fields and act as positive role models, encouraging them to believe in their abilities and in the efforts for a better world. Some of the nominated awards were the Innovation Award, the Science Award and the Entrepreneurship Award.

Youth Makerspace

Youth Makerspace Larnaca has been created following the standards of Makerspaces formed by university institutions and communities abroad and provides access to high quality and high-tech equipment for the development of prototypes and for the implementation of business ideas. This new YBC Project is implemented in cooperation with Larnaca Municipality. It was introduced to public in October 2017 at the Arts and Literature House in Larnaca. In this place, young people can learn about technology, crafts, creative production processes, they can share knowledge and skills and put them in action. A vast range of creative production is supported. Among others, the equipment consists of 3D printers, laser cutters, drones, virtual reality, robotics, arduino, raspberry pi. At Makerspace one may attend various workshops on how to use the equipment provided, idea and project development workshops, etc. This place also operates as a Youth

Entrepreneurship Development Centre, within the framework of YBC programme. Youth Makerspace Larnaca welcomes young people of 6-35 years old, as well as youth groups, school classes, etc. The 2019 budget for the Youth Makerspace is €174 000, based on the Cyprus Government Gazette ([Ο περί Προϋπολογισμού του Οργανισμού Νεολαίας του 2019 Νόμος του 2019](#)).

The STEAMers (Πρόγραμμα «The STEAMers»)

The STEAMers programme is based on the standards of S.T.E.A.M. Centres abroad. Initially, they refer to Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics. The programme offers workshops in Robotics, Programming, Film Making, Photography, Graphic Design, Creative Writing, Music, Theatre and Art. The aim of the workshops is entertainment and learning, cultivation of expressiveness and creativity, as well as psycho-emotional empowerment and personal development of the participants. Participants can experiment and become familiar with new projects, but also to increase their imagination, create, acquire skills and cultivate their interests. The workshops target children and young people aged 6-35 years and are provided by professional trainers. The 2019 budget of the STEAMers programme is €265 000, based on the Cyprus Government Gazette ([Ο περί Προϋπολογισμού του Οργανισμού Νεολαίας του 2019 Νόμος του 2019](#)).

Youth Initiatives

The Youth Initiatives project grants activities organised by young people and youth organisations so that young people can have an active role in cultural, sport, political and social activities in Cyprus. (For more information, please also visit [section 4.7](#)). Under this project, there is a specific action (Action 7) targeting initiatives which foster innovation and creativity. The 2019 budget of the Youth Initiatives project is €842 265, based on the Cyprus Government Gazette ([Ο περί Προϋπολογισμού του Οργανισμού Νεολαίας του 2019 Νόμος του 2019](#)). No specific mention is made for the allocated budget of Action 7.

6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

National strategy

The “National Strategy for a better Internet for children in Cyprus” ([Εθνική στρατηγική για ένα καλύτερο διαδίκτυο για τα παιδιά στην Κύπρο](#)) is the official document addressing media literacy and the safe use of new media for young people in the island. The document was approved by the Cyprus [Council of Ministers](#) in 19 December 2017 and it covers the period 2018-2023.

The purpose of the national strategy for safe use of the Internet by children is to provide children with the opportunities and conditions for using the Internet creatively, safely, morally and responsibly. The strategy is aimed at all stakeholders that contribute to the existence and development of the Internet, its content and services – and not just to the recipients and users of the Internet – in order to provide policy guidelines through priorities, conditions and incentives for developing measures and actions that promote a better internet for children. Some of the aims of the National Strategy include:

- the provision of opportunities for Internet users to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to use the Internet (e.g. through educational programs);
- raising awareness of internet providers on the creative and secure internet;
- educating children and all those involved in children’s development on the safe use of the Internet;
- exploiting all opportunities through formal, informal and non-formal learning to create a culture of safe use of the Internet by all stakeholders.

Based on the above-mentioned aims, the National Strategy focuses on four priorities of action. These are:

- raising awareness, training and utilization;
- high quality online material for children and young people;
- ensuring secure internet infrastructure and environment;
- to combat racism and xenophobia and their sexual exploitation of children.

Each of the priorities is analysed into measures, actions and tasks as well as the institution/authority responsible for their implementation.

As stated in the document, the priorities address all population groups while also targeting specific groups such as minorities, immigrants and refugees, parents and very young children. At the same time, emphasis will be placed on content related to the treatment of racist behaviour, intimidation, sexual exploitation of minors, digital identity and personal data.

For the purposes of the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the “National Strategy for a better Internet for children in Cyprus”, an inter-ministerial committee has been set up consisting of the:

- Minister of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth
- Minister of Justice and Public Order
- Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry (Υπουργείο Ενέργειας, Εμπορίου και Βιομηχανίας)
- Minister of Transport, Communications and Works
- Commissioner of Electronic communications and Postal Regulation (Γραφείο Επιτρόπου Ρυθμίσεως Ηλεκτρονικών Επικοινωνιών και Ταχυδρομείων).

The official document mentions that the committee will meet quarterly to prepare quarterly progress reports and suggestions for improvement. However, the outcomes/monitoring results of the reports are not yet available online and to the public. The document also states that upon completion of the National Strategy, the committee will prepare a final report on the implementation of the Strategy.

Media literacy and online safety through formal education

Media literacy and online safety education are both included in the curriculum of several obligatory and optional school subjects ([Διαδίκτυο και Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα](#)) of primary and secondary education. More specifically:

- **Health Education:** both at Primary and Secondary Education, there are modules under which media literacy and online safety can be taught (e.g. units about Self-development, Emotional health and self-esteem, Life values, Healthy lifestyles and conditions, Development of social skills and relationships, Consumer education, as well as Rights and obligations).
- **Modern Greek:** in the curriculum of this subject, there is a learning objective about acquiring speech production skills in fields of modern technology (SMS, weblog, Facebook, Chat, online learning, use of Skype etc.) in order to understand the different meanings and ideologies, identify the characteristics of the new media, and learn to use them safely through critical text editing.
- **Civic Education and Religious Studies:** the issue of safe Internet is approached through its social aspect, that is, active citizenship via Internet, responsible online behavior, rights and obligations on the Internet.
- **Computer Science:** in lower-secondary education, there are specific units in the curriculum that deal with the topic of internet security.

In addition, in the curriculum of Grades 5 and 6 of the Primary Education, New Technologies have been added as a separate topic since July 2019, and the school subjects

"Health Education – Home Economics as well as Design and Technology – New Technologies" were also redefined. The topic of New Technologies (Utilizing digital technologies for learning) includes three modules: a. Computational thinking, b. Digital skills and c. Digital ability. Supportive teaching materials for educators for the above-mentioned units ([Νέο Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα για την Αξιοποίηση των Ψηφιακών Τεχνολογιών για τη Μάθηση – Ψηφιακή Ικανότητα](#)) are available on the official website of the educational European programme "CyberSafety – A better internet for Children" ([CyberSafety – Καλύτερο Διαδίκτυο για τα Παιδιά](#)) run by Cyprus Pedagogical Institute.

The European project "CyberSafety – A better internet for Children" aims to create a safe internet culture by empowering creative, innovative and critical citizens in the digital society. The project consists of four main pillars:

- The [awareness platform](#) where actors (teachers, parents and students) can find resources and tools, share experiences, expertise and good practices;
- The operation of the Helpline 1480 ([Γραμμή Βοήθειας Helpline 1480](#)) where all actors get advice and support by trained supporters/helpers in real time on issues related to their use of online technologies;
- The operation of the Hotline 1480 ([Γραμμή Καταγγελιών Hotline 1480](#)) where all actors can report illegal content or actions related to illegal child sexual abuse material, racism and xenophobia;
- The establishment of the CYberSafety Youth Panel ([Ομάδα Νέων](#)) that expresses views and exchanges knowledge and experiences on the creative and safe use of the Internet and digital technologies.

Under the CYberSafety project, two main actions/programmes are running in schools of all educational levels. These are:

- Young coaches for Internet 2.0 ([Μικροί Εκπαιδευτές στο Διαδίκτυο 2.0](#))
- E-Safe schools ([Ασφαλές Σχολείο για το Διαδίκτυο](#))

Detailed information about the various seminars, workshops, conferences and lectures organised by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and various stakeholders under the CyberSafety project for students, parents and teacher can be found below:

- Workshops at schools 2019-2020 ([Εκπαιδεύσεις στα σχολεία 2019-2020](#))
- Summer camps on the creative and safe use of internet ([Θερινές Κατασκηνώσεις](#))
- School competitions ([Παραγωγή σύντομου βίντεο από μαθητές](#))
- [Calendar of conferences and events](#), such as:
 - Safer Internet Day ([Ημέρα Ασφαλούς Διαδικτύου](#))
 - ICT in the learning process ([Ημερίδα "Ενσωμάτωση των Τεχνολογιών Πληροφορίας και Επικοινωνίας στη Μαθησιακή Διαδικασία"](#))

In addition, the [Department of Educational Technology \(DET\)](#) of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute implements activities and seminars ([Προγράμματα – Σεμινάρια](#)) of continuing professional learning in topics, such as safe and responsible use of the internet.

Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning

There is not a specific policy, programme, project or initiative – either directly organised or funded – by top level authorities in Cyprus aiming at enhancing young people's media literacy and awareness about online safety issues in the context of non-formal and informal learning.

Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media

As mentioned in the section about “[Media literacy and online safety through formal education](#)”, the main awareness-raising programme about the risks posed by new media is the “CyberSafety – A better internet for Children” ([CyberSafety – Καλύτερο Διαδίκτυο για τα Παιδιά](#)) run by Cyprus Pedagogical Institute.

The CyberSafety project aims to create a safe internet culture by empowering creative, innovative and critical citizens in the digital society. One of the project’s four pillars is the development of the [awareness platform](#) where actors (teachers, parents and students) can find resources and tools, share experiences, expertise and good practices. In addition, under the CYberSafety project, there are various actions/programmes that are running in schools of all educational levels:

- “Young coaches for Internet 2.0” ([Μικροί Εκπαιδευτές στο Διαδίκτυο 2.0](#)) that aims at engaging students to educate others on the creative use and safe use of the Internet. With the guidance of their teachers and experts, junior educators are invited to develop an action plan for their school unit as well as to design and implement actions.
- “E-Safe schools” ([Ασφαλές Σχολείο για το Διαδίκτυο](#)) that aims to provide information about the use of internet and its risks to both students and teachers as well as parents and the wider school community.
- Annual school competition for the production of an awareness-raising video on the safe use of internet ([Παραγωγή σύντομου βίντεο από μαθητές](#)).

In addition, the [Youth Information Centres](#) (YIC) of the YBC organise information days and lectures on topics of cyber-bullying, cyber-ethics and other risks in the use of Internet.

6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Information providers / counselling structures

Awareness raising initiatives

7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

A highlight is that over the last years, policies and services for the health of people have been reinforced. The cross-sectoral cooperation is a key element in all of them. However, a main challenge remains the fact that the services targeting specifically young people are still limited.

7.1 General context

Main trends in the health conditions of young people

This section gives the context for recent trends in the health condition of young people in Cyprus, as given from national and international research data:

Alcohol consumption: Heavy episodic drinking among young people (aged 18–25 years old) is a serious public health concern in Cyprus as showcased by the [European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs \(ESPAD 2015\)](#) and highlighted at a joint meeting of the National Committees of Health and Interior in early December 2017, organized by the National Addictions Authority of Cyprus (NAAC). In the ESPAD context, Cypriot students (from the government-controlled areas) reported substance use prevalence rates of approximately the same magnitude as the ESPAD average for five of the eight key variables studied. However, both last 30 day alcohol use and last 30 day, heavy episodic drinking was clearly more commonly reported in Cyprus, since these two measures were 20 and 15 percentage points above average, respectively, with an increasing estimate among young females.

Drugs addiction: According to the [Country Drug Report 2019](#) for Cyprus, released by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs addiction, cannabis remains the most commonly used illicit drug among the general population in Cyprus, with approximately 1 in 10 adults aged 15-64 years reporting cannabis use at least once during their lifetime. Cannabis use remains concentrated among young adults aged 15-34 years. The long-term analysis indicates a decrease in last year prevalence of cannabis use among this group from 2009, with possible stabilisation in the most recent years. Use of other illicit substances is less common.

A strong link between gender and illicit drug use is reported, with prevalence rates for all drugs being higher among males. The mean age at cannabis experimentation is 18-20 years. Use of new psychoactive substances is also concentrated among 15- to 34-year-olds, with synthetic cannabinoids being the most frequent substances reported.

Tobacco smoking: The [World Health Organisation's \(WHO\) global report \(2015\)](#) on trends in prevalence of tobacco smoking indicates an increasing rate in the daily use of tobacco in the overall population (15 years old and over+ adults) of Cyprus. However, according to the [ESPAD \(2015\)](#) the trends highlight a decrease in smoking among 16-year-old students in Cyprus and the percentage of pupils who reported smoking in the last 30 days is below the ESPAD average. As far as gender differences are concerned, among girls the decrease is much smaller than that between boys.

Sexual Abuse: Based on a publication entitled [Situation Analysis: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights \(SRHR\) of Adolescents in Cyprus](#) released by the Cyprus Family Planning Association in 2015, on date rape cases among young women in tertiary education in Cyprus aged 18-24 years old, data reveals that although the attempts of date rape (1.3 per cent) and date rape cases (1.9 per cent) seem to be small in number, 12.2 per cent of women who answered the questionnaire claimed to have had an 'unwanted sexual experience'. On this number, the majority claimed to have given in to sexual acts due to overwhelming pressure by their partners and fear of their partners leaving them if they did not consent.

In addition to that, as indicated in the [National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography](#), in the context of carrying out the campaign "One in Five" in Cyprus, the University of Cyprus embarked on a scientific survey to record the Cypriot reality. This research showed that the picture in Cyprus is the same or even worse than the rest of the world, as in our country the rate of sexual abuse or exploitation of children is closer to one in four.

Obesity: The [Cyprus Health State report by the EU \(2017\)](#) highlights that 25 per cent of adolescents aged 12 to 17 years old in Cyprus were overweight or obese in 2009/10 (latest year available), based on measured height and weight (which gives more precise measures but is not comparable with available EU averages). This represents a significant increase from estimates a decade earlier. Overweight and obesity problems among children and adolescents greatly increase the risk of being overweight and obese in adulthood. Similarly, the latest data (2015–2017) from the [WHO Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative \(COSI\)](#) show that southern European countries have the highest rate of child obesity. In Cyprus, 1 in 5 children aged 6-9 years old (ranging from 18 per cent to 21 per cent) are obese.

Main concepts

The main concepts which are used in the Cypriot context to promote distinctive understandings on the topic of Health and Well-being are aligned primarily with the definitions given by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) agenda](#).

Health: is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Mental health: is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

Prevention of diseases: Prevention of diseases does not only cover measures aiming to prevent the emerging of diseases such as mitigating the risk factors, but also measures to stop the progress of a disease and to reduce its results once it occurs.

Public health: Public health is the science and art of promoting and improving health, preventing diseases, and extending life through the organized efforts of governmental action.

Mental disorder: behavioural disorder that is caused by a mental disease, that is incompatible with the place, time and age of the person it is affecting (Psychiatric Care Law Num.77(i) of 1997).

Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional and mental wellbeing related to sexuality, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or disability.

Reproductive health: is a state of complete physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system, its functions and operations and not just the absence of disease, dysfunction or disability.

7.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The Council of Ministers bears overall responsibility for the state's role in the broader social protection and health care sector in Cyprus. It exercises this authority primarily through the Ministry of Health and, to a lesser extent, the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and, finally, the Ministry of Interior. Along with them, some other public actors involved are the Youth Board of Cyprus, the Cyprus Sports Organization, the Office of the Commissioner of Children's Rights and the National Addictions Authority of Cyprus.

The roles of these actors are described below:

The **Ministry of Health's** mission is the continuous improvement of the health of the population of Cyprus, through the prevention of disease, and the provision to every citizen of high level health care, respecting the rights of every patient to high quality medical care delivered with dignity.

The **Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance's** mission is the promotion of social justice within a free democratic system based on the pillars of social cohesion and social inclusion. The maintenance and continuous improvement of the standard of living and the quality of life of the working population and of society in general.

The **Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth** is responsible for the administration of public and the supervision of private schools of pre-primary, primary and secondary level as well as the educational institutions of Post-Secondary and Tertiary level and the Universities. It prepares the educational budget, drafts new laws regarding education and sees to the implementation of existing ones. The Minister of Education and Culture is the liaison with the Cabinet for issues Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, having relevant competence in these fields.

The **Ministry of Justice and Public Order** is responsible for the close review and consideration of the need to reform existing legislation in the wide field of public and private law, such as criminal law, legislation that falls within the general concept of the administration of justice, family law, legislation in the fields of equality, human rights, the treatment of offenders and others. Its activities furthermore include the promotion, in collaboration with the Supreme Court, of legislative and administrative measures for the unhampered administration of justice and the smooth functioning of the courts and criminological research for the formation of policies for the prevention and suppression of crime. It has also the responsibility, through the Police Force that the Minister of Justice and Public Order politically heads, of the maintenance of law and order, the preservation of peace and the prevention and detection of crime.

The **Ministry of Interior's** mission is to formulate and implement human-centred policies. The anthropocentric action of the Ministry of the Interior is based on the following policy pillars:

- A qualitative upgrading of the services provided to the citizen
- Answering to the new housing plans put into effect on 1 January 2007
- Upgrading the role and restructuring of local government
- The intensification of efforts to reconstruct and simplify the processes that prove inadequate to meet the modern needs and needs of the citizens.

The **Youth Board of Cyprus (YBC)** as the responsible national body for youth affairs in Cyprus, it contributes significantly to the provision of **prevention services**, the organization of information and public awareness actions on the physical and psychosocial development, health and well-being of youth. At a policy-making level, the Youth Board coordinates the development and implementation of the **National Youth Strategy** who sets Health and Well-being as one of its eight fields of actions. The YBC, as an advisory body, submits through the Minister of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth to the Council of Ministers, suggestions regarding the development of a comprehensive and specialized youth policy for the promotion of the progress and prosperity of all young people in Cyprus.

The **Cyprus Sports Organization** comprises the national authority for Sports promotion and development in Cyprus. Its main objectives are the development of extracurricular sport, the coordination of sporting life in the country, the cultivation of the culture of the Olympic ideal and the promotion of Cyprus in the International Sports Arena.

The **Commissioner for Children's Rights** exclusively deals with the well-being of children (up to the age of 18 years old) and the duties of this agency are being regulated by Cyprus' law regulations.

The **National Addictions Authority Cyprus (NAAC)** which is the responsible coordinating body of Cyprus in the field of legal and illegal use of substances and gambling. The NAAC is responsible for the planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring of the National Strategy on Illicit Substances Dependence and the Harmful Use of Alcohol.

At an international level, the Ministry of Health of Cyprus and the World Health Organization (WHO) demonstrate a long history of productive collaboration targeting common priorities for health and its determinants to promote health and sustainable development within the country. Currently, through the [Country Cooperation Strategy \(CCS\): WHO–Cyprus](#), Cyprus' national health plans are also aligned with the WHO Health 2020 policy framework.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

The existing mechanisms of cross-sectoral cooperation between the responsible Ministries and other public and independent actors are underlined in the respective national strategies, and are customized based on the thematic area covered.

As for the field of youth on Health and Well-being in the National Youth Strategy 2017-2022, the coordination of the [cross-sectoral cooperation](#) for the implementation of the youth priorities falls under the responsibility of the Youth Board of Cyprus.

7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

National strategy(ies)

The Cyprus Sports Organisation (CSO), as the Highest Sports Authority in Cyprus, provides services through its National Schemes to sports federations, sports clubs and citizens, aiming to promote extra-curricular physical education and healthy living through sports in Cyprus. Around 16,800 children, boys and girls, participate in these schemes, either at the level of mass sports (4-18 years old - "Sport for All" Programme with of total of 8,200 minors), or at the level of competitive sports (12 to 18 years old; "National Sport Development Support Scheme "and the "Youth Champions Scheme" with a total of 8,600 minors).

The [Strategy of CSO 2020](#) entitled 'Right to Exercise- Citizens in action" comprises the official action plan released by the CSO for the period 2010-2020 on the topic of Sport, youth fitness and physical activity which promotes the following strategic goals for Cyprus:

1. Maintaining a competitive level of action in International Sporting Competitions both at the level of performance and at the level of managerial positions.
2. Developing enlarged Sporting Programmes of physical activity for the promotion of citizens' health regardless of age or gender.

The Strategy is developed through 8 Key Performance Indicators (KPI), each of which is being broken down and analysed for all the years covering the period 2010-2020. These KIP cover the following areas:

- Improvement of Sport Infrastructure
- Support of Competitive Sporting Programmes
- Development of Non-Competitive Sporting Programmes
- Social role of Sports
- CSO and the European Union
- Funding
- Administration and Management
- Communication

In its entirety the "Strategy of CSO-2020" makes no explicit reference in its agenda to Cyprus' youth. However, this target group is integrated into the respective goals targeting directly the citizens' involvement. Further on, in terms of the current monitoring process or evaluation of the strategy as well as any reforms proposed, no available information is provided for the time being. At the same time, the strategy makes no clear reference to the EU Physical Activity Guidelines, however monitoring and implementation of the EU Guidelines is highlighted through the KPI on 'CSO and the European Union'.

CSO's Strategy is incorporated in the Action Plan of the [National Youth Strategy](#) who sets Health and Well-being as one of its eight fields of actions, as well. Specifically, the priorities of the National Youth Strategy that concern sport and physical activity are:

1. Develop and promote further programmes of recreational activities and sports and
2. Encourage a culture of physical activity and positive attitude towards sports.

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

The main programmes of the CSO agenda that promote sport and physical activity among young people in Cyprus, and which subsequently support the Strategy of CSO 2020, are the following:

Sports for All: This is a programme that aims towards encouraging citizens to practise healthy sports and offer fitness and health happiness and entertainment to the general public. There are 300 Sports Centres that operate in Cyprus and approximately 10,000 members of all ages. There are 80 skilled teachers of Physical Education that serve the Sports Centres on a Pancyprian level. The success of the programme is directly based on the scientific training and on the pedagogical approach of teachers. The main protagonist of the programme as stated by the organisation is the child (youngsters up to 16 years old). The child has the opportunity, through the General Sports Programme, that takes place in the Sports areas of Schools, to get to know and love sports; to be educated through sports and in the future as adolescence and as adult to be pleased through sports practicing. At the same time, the Adult Programme is designed to encourage those of 17 years and over to take up physical activity at least once weekly. The 'Sports for All' Scheme involves the following:

- **Programme of General Sports:** This programme includes basketball, football, handball, volleyball and athletics.
- **Specialized Programmes:** This programme runs the sports that cannot operate in terms of the "General Sports" programme and they are conducted in specially designed sports. (Gymnastics, tennis, Taekwondo, Dancing, Judo, Karate, Child and Swimming, Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Futsal, Beach Volley, Archery, Badminton)
- **Swimming courses:** They take place during the summer (May, June, and July) and are expanded in all the cities and in the countryside.
- **Sports Events:** These aim to enhance the competitive activity of the children that participate in the Programme, to cultivate the sentiment of fair play and to support and promote youngsters with special athletic skills through the organization of local regional and local championship (Handball, Basketball, Football, Cross-country race, Athletics, Volleyball).

Youth champions support plan: CSO has initiated since 2005 a National Support Plan for Young Athletes of Single Olympic Sports in order to become the cornerstone for a successful and long-lasting course for professional young athletes. The direct purpose of the Support Plan is to reinforce young champions by offering every possible technical, scientific, psychological and financial support.

The **National Programme of Support of Development Sports (ESYAA):** This programme was established by the CSO in 1998. The ESYAA is a competition-based scheme covering two areas: 'Developmental' for children up to 16 years old and 'Teenager'

for children 16-18 years old. The design covers specific areas such as training, scientific support and evaluation. The design is based on scientific data, which is determined by international standards.

Programme of Physical Training at the National Guard and Security Corps: This is a programme run by the CSO and covers a budget of approximately 500,000 annually as an additional training scheme for the armed guards of Cyprus' National Guard and Security Corps. The purposes of this programme are the combination of soldiers' entertainment exercises and sports practising, the continuation of the athletic soldiers' racing activity and the promotion of fair play behaviour.

European Sports Week: The European Sports Week has been established by the European Commission as the largest annual European sporting campaign, with 35 European countries participating in it. This initiative aims to promote participation in sport and physical activity and raise awareness of the benefits of this participation. The Week is for everyone – particularly young people. The implementation of the week across Europe is largely decentralized and is being carried out in close cooperation with different individuals, public authorities and representatives of the sporting movement, civil society organizations and the private sector. In Cyprus, this initiative is being implemented by a number of stakeholders and CSO enacts as the coordinating authority providing extensive information and information delivery for the planning of the actions that are about to take place before and during the campaign.

Physical education in schools

Within the scope of the Cypriot Education System, Physical Education (PE) is a compulsory subject that provides regular opportunities for physical activity among students inside the school setting. The Physical Education Curriculum both for the Primary and Secondary Level Education is organized on the basis of the following six purposes, covering a spectrum of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours intended to be acquired by the students:

1. Development of kinaesthetic skills and exemplary performance of some of these.
2. Acquisition of knowledge from sports science (how and why) and their parallel implementation for effective participation in current and future physical activity conditions.
3. Knowledge and achievement of a fitness level of health.
4. Acquisition of positive experiences from physical activity and the development of self-expression and sociability.
5. Understanding and respecting the diversity of individuals and groups while working with everyone.
6. Demonstration of responsible athletic and social behaviour, as the result of participation in physical activities.

Focusing on the time allocated for Physical Education in schools at upper secondary level (Lyceum), out of the total 35 periods (1period=45 minutes) per week comprising the courses' schedule, the 1st grade Lyceum students attend P.E. for 1,5 periods/week, the 2nd grade Lyceum students attend P.E. for 2,5 hours/week, whilst for the 3rd Grade Lyceum Students P.E. is not a compulsory course. A note needs to be made that the differentiation of the scheduled time for P.E. for the 2nd Grade Lyceum timetable is due to the introduction of a First Aid Course as part of the P.E. Curriculum offered for an extra period per week.

The P.E. Curriculum introduced since 2010 is also supported by the official instructional books offered by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth and as additional pedagogical tools, software material is being provided through the Ministry's website to support the instructions of the P.E. teachers (e.g. e-class for swimming and presentation of folklore dances through video).

Alongside the promotion of Sports, Traditional Dances and First Aid Courses through the P.E. Curriculum, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth runs annually as an extra-curricular programme the "School Sport Games" which encourages students to participate at a regional and national level at Sports Competitions.

Collaboration and partnerships

There are no official top-level guidelines to support collaboration and the formation of partnerships between schools, youth workers, health professionals and other sport organisations.

7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

National strategy(ies)

The elaboration of the [Strategy on the Rights of the Child in health \(2017-2025\)](#) is part of the Ministry of Health's priorities included in its Strategic Plan for the years 2017-2025, and is specifically targeting young people up to the age of 18 years old. This National Strategy aims to be a "guide" emphasizing the promotion and protection of the health rights of children residing in Cyprus, providing a clear framework for action to improve the current structures and, through interdisciplinary collaboration methods, provide holistic health care to the child, with their own active involvement. The content of the strategy sets the guidelines for all stakeholders on their issues of competence. It also includes specific objectives and defined actions to be promoted by those involved.

The Strategy is founded on eight pillars as follows:

1. Health Services for the Child
2. Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)
3. Nutrition and Maternal Breastfeeding
4. Infectious Diseases - Vaccinations
5. Prevention of violence and accidents
6. Alcohol, Substances, Tobacco
7. Environment
8. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

The [National Strategy on the Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Youth \(2018-2025\)](#) was prepared with the assistance of executives from various ministries and other public and private sector bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and representatives of the young people themselves who participated in a two-day laboratory of the Ministry of Health, which was organized on 13-14 June 2017 in Nicosia, in cooperation and with the participation of a representative of the WHO-Region of Europe. The Key Action Pillars of the Strategy are the following:

1. Maternity Health
2. Family Planning - Infertility - Birth Control, Adverse Pregnancy – Abortion
3. Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STIs) - HIV / AIDS - Reproductive System Infections
4. Prevention of Cancer of the Reproductive System
5. Preventing and Managing Cases of Sexual Violence
6. With the existence of the Youth Strategy, concerted actions at national level on the issue of Sexual and Reproductive Health in Cyprus are now organized and implemented. At the same time, this strategy for young people ensures that young people themselves are involved and involved in such an important issue that they

are directly concerned, which is their fundamental right and plays a vital role in their own development and well-being.

The National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Violence in Schools runs between 2018-2022 under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, and specifically the School Violence Observatory department. It is envisioned that through the implementation of the National Strategy, schools are safe, democratic and child-friendly spaces where all children are actively involved, enjoy their rights, co-opt, acquire knowledge and skills, cultivate values and attitudes that lead them to develop their full potential.

The key action pillars of the strategy are:

1. Creation of information systems
2. Legal and administrative measures to prevent and manage violence at school
3. Strengthening structures
4. Enriching knowledge and enhancing skills for developing peaceful attitudes and behaviors by students.
5. Involvement of children
6. Empowering parents / guardians, teachers, management team

The Strategy endorses a monitoring mechanism, however there has not been any assessment or update.

Cyprus's [Action plan on the Treatment of Illicit Substances Addiction and the Harmful Use of Alcohol \(2017-2020\)](#), produced and promoted by the [National Addictions Authority Cyprus](#), provides the overarching political framework for the period 2017-2020 on the topic of Drugs and Alcohol addiction. This action plan is based on an internal mid-term multi-criterion evaluation of the National Strategy comprised for the years 2013-2016 and goes under the umbrella of the [National Drugs Policy and Alcohol Policy 2013-2020](#). In continuation of the strategy, the current action plan aims to reduce the demand for and supply of drugs and reduce the health and social risks and harms caused by drugs and alcohol. In doing so, the five existing pillars are enhanced: prevention; treatment and social reintegration; harm reduction; supply control and regulation; and international cooperation. However, a new pillar is introduced for the period 2017-2020, that of the promotion of research, education and evaluation. In a similar way to other European countries, Cyprus evaluates its drug policy and strategy through ongoing indicator monitoring and specific research projects.

The Inter-Ministerial Drugs Committee is responsible for coordination among the responsible ministries. It is chaired by the President of the Republic and comprises six ministers from the Ministries of Health; the Interior; Justice and Public Order; Education, Culture, Sport and Youth; Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance; and Defence. Strategic and operational coordination is carried out by the National Addictions Authority Cyprus (NAAC), which addresses illicit drugs, other substances and addictive behaviours. The NAAC is presided over by a chairperson, who is appointed by the President of the Republic and also acts as the National Drug Coordinator; the NAAC has seven members, who are nominated by the Council of Ministers. The NAAC is responsible for the planning, implementation, supervision and monitoring of the national strategy.

[Action Plan for Child Injuries and poisoning \(2016-2020\)](#): The Ministry of Health, recognizing the need for a coordinated approach for addressing the problem of childhood accidents and poisoning, began in 2002 the first coordinated actions with the establishment of the Advisory Committee on the Prevention of Child Accidents and Poisons, with a key mandate to develop an action plan on child accidents and poisoning. Cyprus was the first country at European level to develop and adopt a Strategic Action Plan to Prevent Accidents and Poisoning in Children. Currently, after the submission of the proposal by the Ministry of Health to the Council of Ministers, for the adoption of a five

year strategic plan for the prevention of unintentional childhood injuries in the country, the Action Plan for Child Injuries and poisoning has been approved and adopted for the period 2016-2020.

The Action Plan aims to substantially reduce morbidity and mortality from unintentional injuries (road crashes, drowning and suffocation, falls, poisoning and burns and scalds) by setting realistic goals and taking advantage of the good practices of other countries. For each type of accident, the basic principles of prevention that have been repeatedly tested in many countries with a great success have been also adopted in this action plan. These principles are as follows:

- programming and educational intervention to ensure greater safety for children
- enforcement /legislation
- environmental and product modification

Each ministry involved is responsible for implementing its own Plan of Action within a time frame and cover all the expenses derived from its activities from its own yearly budget. Furthermore, each ministry will submit a yearly report about the progress of the implementation of its activities. The Advisory Committee for the Prevention of Childhood Injuries and Poisonings will follow up on the progress of the implementation of the strategic plan and will also cover any coordination needed.

The [National Strategy for the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breast feeding \(2011\)](#) seeks to increase both the initiation of breastfeeding rates at hospital discharge and its exclusive continuation for the first six months. With many mothers falling into the youth age group of 18-35 years old, this is particularly relevant for young people. This policy updates the previous policy in line with current scientific evidence on the short and long-term benefits of breast feeding to the mother and child, to achieve higher exclusive breastfeeding rates for the first six months and thereafter for breastfeeding to continue with appropriate complementary foods.

On 6 April 2016 – the day before World Health Day, which in 2016 focused on diabetes – the Council of Ministers of Cyprus approved the developed [National Strategy on Diabetes \(2016-2020\)](#). All related stakeholders, such as representatives of the International Diabetes Federation, patients' organizations, universities, scientific societies and ministerial departments worked synergistically in developing the strategy, which was coordinated by the Ministry of Health. The Strategy is based on five pillars: 1) Prevention and health promotion 2) Diagnosis and treatment 3) Rehabilitation services 4) Research 5) Documentation/diabetes registry. The key objectives of the strategy are to prevent diabetes and its complications, to ensure the quality of services at low cost and provide effective care according to the needs of each individual (vulnerable groups) through a holistic approach. The strategy is particularly relevant for youth because as noted in the strategy, research data shows an increasing rate of Type 1 and 2 diabetes among young people and children.

Finally, the [National Strategy for a better Internet for Children \(2018-2023\)](#) is a newly introduced reform approved by the Council of Ministers. The strategy prioritises sensible and responsible use of the internet by young people, by following the guidelines of the [European Strategy 'Better Internet for children'](#) and adjusting the proposed actions on the Cypriot paradigm. The "National Strategy for a Better Internet for Children in Cyprus" forms part of the broader Cyber Security Strategy of Cyprus Republic and is addressed not only to recipients and users of the internet but to all stakeholders that contribute to the development of internet content and services providing the basic development guidelines and actions for promoting a better internet for young people. On that basis, currently the implementation of the strategy goes under the authority of the Office of the Commissioner of Electronic Communications & Postal Regulation of Cyprus. The key priorities of the strategy as underlined in the official document is:

- 1) Enhancing critical and responsible use of the Internet.

- 2) Developing and promoting appropriate educational content.
- 3) Ensuring a secure online environment.
- 4) Combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children on Cyberspace.
- 5) Reducing cyberbullying incidents and racist behaviour.

Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

Smoking Cessation Programme

The Ministry of Health provides a free smoking cessation programme that incorporates a combination of interventions, counselling (evidence-based protocol that supports cognitive behavioural interventions) and pharmaceutical use (implementation of nicotine patches step 1: 25mg, step2: 15mg, step3: 10mg). These programmes are free of charge and are provided throughout the country in all the cities (Nicosia, Limassol, Paphos, Larnaca, and the Famagusta area). Individuals who are interested in quitting smoking can contact the Smoking Cessation Programmes (SCP) on a toll-free number (1431), available throughout the country. Then, their information is recorded, such as their name, phone number and town where they live, and they are contacted by SPC individuals to arrange a group or individual meeting or just become informed about the programme. The programmes are usually short-term and include one hour long weekly meeting for about 6 to 8 weeks. The counsellors assist the individuals to be motivated for a smoking cessation, to choose when to quit, form a rationale behind quitting, to become psycho-educated in regards to the physical and psychological addiction from nicotine and guidance towards the steps for maintaining the cessation. Throughout this process, the individuals are supported during their attempts to quit, are encouraged to discuss difficulties and positive consequences from smoking cessation with their counsellors. Their relapses are addressed and assistance is provided on how to face them. Individuals have their carbon monoxide calculated with smokelyzers which appears to be a useful tool for motivation and increases goal engagement. The SPC however does not assist young people under the age of 18.

Group meetings - the individual can participate in one of the closed groups for smoking cessation where he/she will have the opportunity to stop smoking and to learn all the necessary skills so that he/she maintains a smoke-free lifestyle and share this important change in his/her life with other individuals.

Individual meetings - The person can participate in an individual smoking cessation programme, and meanwhile discover own ways for maintaining a smoke free lifestyle.

Pharmaceutical aids - each person receives counselling intervention as well as free nicotine patches based on each individuals' personalized needs, so that the smoking cessation process is more effective.

In addition, SPC is involved in actions of enlightenment and events to inform the public of the damaging consequences of smoking and their options available to quit. These actions are also promoted through the media and are carried out close to the World Tobacco Day (31st of May). Also, SPC provide psycho-educational information to schools in order to assist future adults to make consensual decisions and be insulated from peer pressure. Even though, the SPC cannot provide services to underage individuals, when the SPC receive referrals from teenagers information is being provided in regard to the online smoking cessation programme, that has been developed by Dr. Karekla's research lab, ACT Healthy, of the Department of Psychology of the University of Cyprus, flexiquit.com and encouragement to use the toll free number 1410 of the Youth Board of Cyprus. The SPC are also involved in research projects that have as a goal evaluating current policies, access to sources and services in order to make improvements for the public services.

Other existing top-level initiatives that aim to encourage healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people fall into the categories of school education and prevention campaigning which will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

Health Education: Within the context of the implementation of the New Curricula in the Cypriot Education System, Health Education has been introduced as a separate cognitive subject in the syllabuses of Primary and Secondary Education Schools. The students not only have the chance to get informed about the physical consequences of certain behaviours but also to consider the factors that affect their behaviour, to practice communication and cooperation skills, to manage conflicts and cope with peer pressure, to deal with social stereotypes, to manage issues such as security, education consumer rights and responsibilities, road safety, obesity, etc. The Health Education Programme does not seek to cover only the teaching process within the classroom but also ensure that students can live and operate in an environment that promotes the adoption of healthy lifestyle choices. Within this framework, all schools are encouraged, starting in 2009 on an annual basis, to develop a Health Education and Crime Prevention Action Plan aiming at taking initiatives and actions locally in the school unit for addressing timely social problems and in particular delinquency and security environment, tolerance, cooperation. The Health Education Course supports schools in the holistic approach to serious offending incidents through the Rapid Response Team.

Sex education and personal relationships education: Issues related to sexual education are mainly integrated into the curriculum of Health Education in the thematic sub-section "Family Programming, Sexual and Reproductive Health". The sub-section contains topics that are directly related to a holistic understanding of sexual and reproductive health such as national and European legal framework, stereotypes, domestic violence, dangerous sexual behaviour, homophobia, the role of religion and the media, etc. These themes are approached in relation to the role of pressure friends, values of life, sex stereotypes, self-confidence, her security, rights and obligations as well as abuse substances.

The [Health Education Programmes Office](#) is located in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth and supports schools from all levels of education carrying out additionally the following actions:

- **Seminars for Teaching Staff.** These seminars are announced with circulars on the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth website.
- **Support of Health Education Programme.** It is supported with scheduled visits to schools (upon submission of an online application by the schools).
- **Funding school unit actions.** The funded actions are designed to strengthen the factors that serve the goals of Health Education as they have emerged both for the Cypriot and international reality: Development of personal and social skills, effective management of emotions and development of communication skills, promotion of self-esteem, improvement of the psychosocial climate at school, support of the family self-sufficiency. The request for a grant is made to the Health Education and Citizenship Coordinating Committee. Application forms and relevant information is given in the CIRCULARS No. 2878 for Primary Education and no. 5398 for Secondary General Education and 1237 for Secondary Technical and Vocational Education.
- **Supporting schools for the holistic treatment of serious delinquency cases.** The request is made to the Committee for Direct Intervention. Application forms and relevant information is given in CIRCULARS No. 2923 for Primary Education, no. 5487 for Secondary General Education and no. 1298 for Secondary Technical and Vocational Education. Parallel to the above- mentioned group, the School Violence Observatory which collects, records, encodes, and analyses data on the extent and forms of violence at school also offers assistance.
- **Implementation of other Health Education Programmes**
 - **The European network of Health Promoting Schools:** the European network of Health Promoting Schools (ENHPS), aims to develop healthy lifestyle for all

- members of the school unit. The programme has been implemented in schools with the cooperation of the Ministry of Health.
- **Well-being:** the programme is the result of an inter-state agreement between Greece and Cyprus. Within the framework of this programme, each participating school from Cyprus cooperates with a school from Greece for two years and explores an issue related to health (smoking, alcohol, drugs, food, etc.)
 - **Zones of Educational Priority:** It is a programme of selective or focused prevention which aims at strengthening networks of schools. Within the Z.E.P. areas a number of innovative activities such as the operation of recreation and entertainment rooms, operation of student clubs (dance, theatre, journalism, music, painting, radio, soccer) and programmes of educational, cultural and health activities is promoted.
 - **Folk Stories and Tales against addiction:** It is an experiential folk story telling programme in the form of workshops. The programme aims to prevent addiction through culture, art and folk storytelling.
 - **Road Safety Education:** The Road Safety Education Programme aims to sensitise teachers and pupils on road safety issues. The actions include training teachers and pupils with the use of booklets, audio-visual material and active involvement of both teachers and pupils. The programme aims to promote attitudes and skills towards safe and responsible behaviour in traffic safety matters.
 - **Mentor:** The 'Mentor' Life Education Units are mobile classrooms where a programme aiming at the prevention of drug use and addiction is offered to pupils ranging from the Class A' of Primary School to Class B' Gymnasium.
 - **Anti-drug Education Seminars:** These are three-day-seminars which aim at preventing drug addiction. Class B' from the Gymnasium are chosen to participate in the seminars. Upon returning to their schools they work towards dissemination and a peer-led approach.
 - **Sex education Programme:** This programme is the result of collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth and the Medical Association. It deals with the sexuality of the individual and aims to develop interpersonal relations, respect and mutual understanding between the two sexes.
 - **School without tobacco:** With circulars number 2110 and 4316 for the Primary and Secondary Education respectively, all schools from all levels of education are expected to implement actions against smoking for pupils, teachers, parents and guardians. An outline of a policy that can be adopted by the schools as well as activities that can be carried out both at school and in the classroom are attached with the circulars. Moreover, information is given about the negative effects of smoking on a person's health and statistics about teenage smokers in Cyprus. Details about private and state stakeholders that can support anti-smoking plans of action are supplied.
 - **Access to printed and online material:** Teachers can borrow books on Health Education from the library situated in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (room 122A). The Health Education Programmes Office supplies all school units with books on Health Education
 - **Promotion of Good Practices on Health Education:** The Health Education Programmes Office organizes meetings and conventions between schools aiming at exchanging material. Moreover, schools are invited to participate in competitions organized by the office. They submit projects they have created on prevention practices related to smoking, safety and delinquency. Examples of good practices can be found on the website as well as in relevant circulars.

Peer-to-peer education approaches

Currently, there are no top-level guidelines, programmes projects or initiatives facilitating or relying on peer-to-peer education.

Collaboration and partnerships

Collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth and the Health Professionals-Visitors is key for promoting healthy lifestyles for students in schools. Their operation began with a Ministerial Decision in 1976. In particular, School Health Services (SHS) are provided to all children attending Primary, Secondary and Secondary-Technical Education schools. School health services staff is comprised by health professionals that can help all students within the school environment. As the contribution of the HP for encouraging healthy lifestyles and health nutrition falls largely into the category of information and counselling structures, it will be discussed in the following section.

Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people

Information providers / counselling structures:

- Lectures for future parents and pregnant women are provided by the Health Visitors of the Ministry of Health. These lectures are targeting future parents and pregnant women for informing, educating and preparing them for their new role.
- Lectures on the implications of smoking again by the Health Visitors of the Ministry of Health for young people to be informed on the implications of smoking in their life.
- Lectures on the Prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted disease aim at providing students the necessary knowledge and competencies for the development of healthy lifestyles of students. These programmes are provided by Health Visitors, in cooperation with the administration and teaching personnel of the public schools.
- [1410 Help Line](#), offered by the Youth Board of Cyprus since 1990. It is dialed by people in search for responsible answers on daily life matters, but also on more complex issues such as addictive substances, sexuality issues, eating disorders, etc. Among the services offered are: raising awareness on various psychosocial and social issues, giving a referral to other experts and services for further examination and intervention, if necessary, counselling, enabling callers to share their concerns, providing advice and encouragement on their next step.
- [E-Counselling](#) is the web-site of 1410 Service. It handles the same issues and follows the same principles and deontology. What differs is the counselling process. Instead of talking on the phone, youth can chat with a counselor through your pc or smart phone.

Youth-targeted information campaigns:

The Ministry of Health has undertaken a multi-faceted public information campaign on smoking legislation, as part of its efforts to promote public health issues. Furthermore, campaigns to prevent HIV infections among young people are carried out within the framework of the National AIDS Committee, in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organisations. Activities include raising awareness among young people through health and sexual education programmes, lectures at colleges and universities, and offering community-based counselling and testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases in collaboration with NGOs. A campaign against salt intake aiming to salt reduction has been initiated the last years by the Ministry of Health including a number of publications and actions that help reduce the salt intake into the population.

7.5 Mental health

National strategy(ies)

In Cyprus in 1997, the "[Psychiatric Care Law](#)" was passed, which was subsequently amended in 2003 and 2007. This law provides for the establishment and operation of Psychiatric Centres for the care of mentally ill individuals, the safeguarding of the rights of these individuals and the definition of the duties and responsibilities of their relatives. The approval by the House of Representatives of this law has been a major advance in psychiatric reform, particularly with regard to the protection of patients' rights, the implementation of de-institutionalization and the promotion of community psychiatry in Cyprus.

However, despite the existence of this legislation since 2007, there has not been a specific policy so far addressing issues of promotion and prevention. The Mental Health Information Bulletin containing data and activities in EU Member States reported that the most promising step in Cyprus is the recommendation of the Monitoring and Protection Committee for Mental Illnesses, which aims to develop links between the various local authorities to discuss, promote and encourage the implementation of programmes to address mental disorders.

According to the WHO Atlas for Mental Health, Mental Health Policy in Cyprus, available since 2008, is being implemented on a limited scale. In recent years, policy has focused on delivering services to the community and away from the institutional care base. This has been achieved to a great extent and is still ongoing. A framework for cooperation between government agencies, local authorities and NGOs or voluntary organizations aims to provide efficient and high-quality services that are accessible to all.

Improving the mental health of young people

The Mental Health Services of the Ministry of Health aim towards a "holistic treatment of mental patients through prevention (first-degree interventions), medical care and psychological treatment (secondary interventions) and rehabilitation (tertiary interventions). Mental health services can be categorised based on the target population they serve in four categories: Adult Mental Health Services; Mental and Adolescent Mental Health Services; Substitution Structures and Mental Health Services within the Prison Division. Based on this categorisation, young people do not appear as a separate target group of the mental health services. As youth in Cyprus covers a range of 14-35 years of age, mental health services offered to teenagers cover ages 14-17 while all other services cover the range 18-35. Regarding more details, references to these services are listed and described in the [official webpage](#) of the Ministry of Health. A key example of these is the following:

PERSEAS and PROMETHEAS Counselling centres belong to the Mental Health Services of the Ministry of Health and exclusively specialize in adolescent Dependent behaviours. The centres respond to the particular needs of every adolescent / young adult until the age of 22, and their family, through group, and individualized, intensive, or short-term interventions. The main goal is that every family member will be able to develop and acquire more efficient ways of communication and relationships as well as useful coping skills for a dependence-free meaningful life. Therapeutic programmes target early intervention so that the adolescent's / young adults' course towards dependence from illicit (drugs), legal (alcohol) substances, or other dependent behaviours (gambling, internet) is blocked and dependence is prevented. All our services are free and confidential.

The Youth Board of Cyprus (national authority), recognizing the importance of safeguarding mental health especially for young people, is leading a range of services that openly respond to all young people. The aim of the services is not only to help people with mental disorders, but also to empower all young people to be able to secure their own welfare on their own. Recently, the services provided by the Youth Board of Cyprus have

been restructured and upgraded to provide even more qualitative support to youth. The relevant services are listed below:

1410 Help Line: This line is addressed to all those who want to get responses on issues related to their everyday life, family and social relationships, school issues, isolation, antisocial behaviour, anxiety, depression, mourning, but also for more complex issues such as dependency, sexuality issues, eating disorders, etc. The same service is also available over the internet.

Counselling Services 'Protasi': The purpose of these advisory services is to provide support and counselling through personalized counselling to young people, couples and families facing challenges in their lives. They are addressed to teenagers and young people who want to share their personal concerns confidentially with a qualified advisor. In addition, they are aimed at couples and parents who have difficulties in their relationships and / or their families. The services are provided by registered psychologists, without any charge to the public.

Prevention Centres "Micri Arktos": This programme aims at developing personal and social skills, empowering protective agents, and limiting those factors that can lead the individual to substance use, an addictive relationship or activity and any harmful or even degrading behaviour. Interventions are done through experiential workshops and psycho-education groups and aim at personal development and empowerment through the growth of individual skills and competences such as self-awareness, problem-solving and decision-making, managing emotions such as anxiety and anger; communication skills, etc.

At the same time, multiple NGOs that specialise in providing support on particular mental thematic areas activate in Cyprus and offer their services independently.

Suicide rates

The most updated information provided by a [Eurostat survey](#) on suicide rates showcase that approximately 5 in every 100,000 individuals took their own lives in Cyprus in the year 2015 – the lowest rate in the EU - and with male individuals having a higher ratio. The suicides that have been recorded in the Death Cause Archive in Cyprus since 2004, as stated in the [Report on mortality statistics in Cyprus 2004-2016](#), show a significant increase, especially in men. In 2014, 44 people committed suicide, in 2015 the number was 40 people and in 2016 it was 36. The problem occurs, in principle, at ages 15-19, reaching a maximum at ages 20-44 and then gradually decreases. The reasons given for Cyprus' low suicide rate are not stated. The absence of initiatives for suicide prevention can be linked back to these low percentage figures.

7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks

Policy framework

There are currently no top-level legal and/or policy frameworks mechanisms of early detection and intervention, and signposting of young people facing health risks.

Stakeholders

Other official mechanisms for the detection and signposting of young people facing health risks are being operated by various public stakeholders:

School Health Services (SHS)

The main objectives of these services are the prevention of illness as well as the promotion of health and well-being of the students through: 1. Early detection and care of students with health problems 2. Development of healthy attitudes and healthy behaviours by students 3. Ensure a healthy environment for children at school 4. Prevention of communicable diseases at school.

In doing so, in terms of the early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks, the SHS is conducting screening tests on vision acuity, hearing tests, normal developmental physical growth, colour vision tests, scoliometres for early detection of deformities of the spinal cord, particularly scoliosis. In addition, the SHS is responsible for the provision of vaccinations. The Health Visitors give to students the routine vaccinations according to the existing vaccination programme of the Ministry of Health. The students as well as the parents are informed about a certain vaccine that will be given. In order to vaccinate a student at school it is necessary that the Health Visitor takes the parents or guardians written consent. The prevention provision includes finally the provision of medication, information on the necessary vaccinations, HPV vaccine according to the programme of the Ministry of Health, investigation of infectious diseases, evaluation of vaccination coverage, participation in continuing education programmes of School Administration.

School Dental Care Services

Preventive dental services are provided to pre-primary, primary and secondary education students. Public Dental Services have 4 mobile units that visit primary and secondary schools located in remote areas or areas of low socio-economic level and with an increased caries index and offer children free preventive and curative treatment.

Early detection and response program for oral problems.

This is an existing programme which is gradually expanding to include as many age groups as possible of children and adolescents. The programme aims to give a free oral examination to all children aged 5, 6, 11, 15 years old, while undergoing oral health treatment in their local hospitals.

Pan-Cypriot Hearing-problem prevention campaign "I Hear"

The Cyprus Youth Clubs Organization 'KOKEN' run in the year 2018 a Pan-Cypriot Hearing Prevention Campaign titled "I hear". The campaign included free screening for the residents of each region who felt that their hearing had diminished, regardless of their age or occupation. At the same time, the campaign's goal was to raise awareness of the abolition of the stereotypes that unfortunately continue to exist for hearing impaired people, especially young people.

Guidance to stakeholders

The guidelines which regulate the providence of services by these stakeholders are not documented in available data.

Target groups

There is no specific differentiation when referring to the target groups by the programmes addressed.

Funding

The funding in all cases is part of the state budget allocated to the respective stakeholders for the providence of their services.

7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

The [World Health Organisation \(2012\)](#) outlines that *youth friendly* health services must meet a set of criteria, including being accessible and at locations and hours of easy access to teenagers; meeting the expectations and needs of young people in order to motivate their demand; promoting access equity and equality.

The guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the Development of Child friendly Health Services underline that the fundamental principles that should characterize "Child Friendly" (up to 16 years old) health services include the following:

1. Respect for fundamental human rights and the specific rights of the child.
2. Dignity
3. Participation
4. Equal access to quality health services
5. The best interests of the child.

Following these guidelines, various counselling services which operate under the supervision of the Youth Board of Cyprus are provided to help young people receive responsible answers on issues that concern their daily life, but also on more complex issues such as addictive substances, sexuality issues, eating disorders and more. These are services that are based on the principles of being free of charge, anonymous and confidential as a way of making the services more attractive to young people. E-counselling goes under the umbrella of these services. The counsellors of the E-Counselling are trained -as outlined in the official website - to handle all the cases with professionalism, regardless of gender, origin, ethnicity, age or sexuality orientation, similarly as the 1410 Help Line. The conversation with the counsellor through the software is confidential and no one else is allowed access other than the consulted individual.

On the issue of cyber-bullying, a helpline is also provided through the [Cyprus Safer Internet Centre](#). The helpline 1480 operates within the framework of the European project CyberSafety – Better Internet for Kids in Cyprus, aiming to ensure that all users can receive expert advice and support from qualified operators, in real time, on topics related to the use of the internet and digital technologies. The helpline services are intended for children, adolescents, parents, teachers, and other professionals, providing advice and support on issues related to the safe, responsible and ethical use of the internet and other digital media. The helpline operators provide, among other aspects, advice and support on issues such as cyberbullying, excessive use, data privacy, problems on social networks (e.g. fake profiles, account violations, inappropriate and harmful content), sexting. The relevant services are provided on the basis of the guidelines and legislations of the national law and are interwoven with the aspect of awareness and protection of the users' personal data. Additionally, the services have ensured that reporting mechanisms are interoperable both with the core platform and with reporting via service providers such as social networking services. Communication with the relevant bodies in Cyprus is being established so as to ensure the right procedures.

At the same time on the basis of youth participation for creating a more youth friendly environment for tackling internet safety issues, CYberSafety Youth Panel is a new initiative by the Cyprus Safer Internet Centre which encourages children and young people from different demographic groups in Cyprus in an interactive participation and active contribution on the creative and responsible use of the internet. Computer Science university students act as mentors for the younger ones by providing a role model, while members of the Cyprus Children's Parliament, the Commissioner for Children's Rights Young Advisors and the Young Coaches for the Internet are part of the Youth Panel.

An important action which supports the Youth Participation in the safe use of the internet is the Young Coaches programme, during which students develop and implement an action plan for their school on the safe use of the internet. The CYberSafety Youth Panel allows young people to express their views and exchange knowledge and experiences concerning their use of digital and online technologies, as well as tips on how to stay safe.

“School-based health services” supervised by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, which are intended to offer health services within the school environment, as well as the “Home-based services” provided by the Ministry of Health which provide guidance and services inside the home/family environment, are services which help to promote a youth friendly healthcare for Cyprus’ youth.

Moreover, a “Mediation and Conflict Resolution programme” which is piloted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth comprises an initiative to promote a ‘peer

to peer' setup of School Mediation, as it gives the opportunity to high-school students to become third party 'Mediators' that work to prevent and resolve issues and conflicts which affect the well-being of their peers inside their local schools.

In addition, the newly established National Health Insurance Scheme is an E-health services system, which is thus a more youth-friendly service. Currently, part of the pending agenda of the Parliamentary Health Committee for discussion stands the Bill concerning the e-Health law (File num. 23.01.059.020-2018) which involves the constitution of the legal and institutional framework for the use of an e-Health system operated under the authority of the National Authority for e-Health. This will involve primarily the introduction of digitised health records, the expansion of medical services to remote areas via telemedicine and robotics, and access to international medical data banks.

7.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

As illustrated in the [Cyprus News Agency on 25th November 2019](#), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth announced the preparation of the National Strategy for Sports. The preparation begins by conducting a research and this is the first step towards modernizing Cypriot sports.

Ongoing debates

The [School Health Service \(SHS\)](#) in Cyprus are in the process of undergoing changes due to the introduction of the new National Health System for the whole population of Cyprus. As political decisions are still awaited for on the exact form and functions of the SHS in the new era of the new Health System, here is some information as to new initiatives concerning the contribution of the SHS as announced by the Ministry of Health:

- There are thoughts of organising clinics friendly to the adolescents especially in the summer when schools are closed and adolescents have nobody to contact, with concerns such as sexual and psychological problems.
- There are also thoughts of setting up an internet page of the School Health Service which parents, children and adolescents can contact with questions concerning their health in general also sexual and psychological health included), to which they will get a reply.
- A fairly recent protocol on managing school children with suspected health problems concerning Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia and other eating disorders is being tested in the last two years. This is prepared by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, the Psychiatric Services and the School Health Service through personal interviews and examinations of school children and is currently under discussion and debate as to the direction the supporting initiatives will take.
- The lecture on sexually transmitted diseases is thought of being included as a part of a program which will be according to age and will include prevention and protection of children from sexual abuse and violence.

8. CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

The [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#) is the main actor involved in policy-making and the main governmental authority responsible for preserving and promoting culture and creativity in the country and abroad. Although there is not a youth culture and creativity policy in the country, the field is covered through the [National Youth Strategy](#) and the policies of the Ministry as described in the following sub-chapters.

8.1 General context

Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation

Following a series of consultations with young people in 2015-2016 where creativity and culture was highlighted as the main form of expression of young people, one of the action fields of the National Youth Strategy -as mentioned in [chapter 1 on Youth Policy](#)- was dedicated to Creativity and Culture.

Accordingly, cultural events prevail young people's activity recorded through the national funding instrument "Youth Initiatives" which is run by the Youth Board of Cyprus. The programme provides to youth, incentives for mobility and active participation in the cultural, political and social life of Cyprus. 24.78% of the actions funded in 2018 concerned cultural interventions ([116 funded projects out of the total of 468 successful applications](#)).

Music festivals, modern music concerts, photographic exhibitions, local folk culture and philanthropic events are the main activities funded which reveal that some forms of arts such as painting, classical music, dance, theatre, movies and so on are neglected and not preferred by young people in Cyprus.

Therefore, the main challenge to the activity of young people in such forms of arts is the lack of proper education as stated by the young people themselves throughout the consultation process that took place for the purposes of drafting the National Youth Strategy. Arts and music have always been considered as secondary subjects under the official curriculum of schools. Despite the fact that all schools and communities organise events for different occasions throughout the year, these are restricted to organising choirs, bands and dance shows with the participation of youngsters who attain private arts classes during their out of school free time, which are paid by the families only. Theatre and dance performances are not coordinated by specialists in the subjects, but by literature and physical education teachers respectively.

Despite these challenges though, children with special talent in music have the opportunity to attend public musical schools and the rest who are interested in other forms of arts can choose the specific sector (Fine Arts) during their upper secondary school attendance.

Local authorities and the Youth Board of Cyprus offer to youngsters and young people up to the age of 35, the opportunity to participate in art classes on a very low cost, either through the Open Schools of the Municipalities or the Steamers programme of the Youth Board of Cyprus. Experience though shows that, a very limited number of young people takes part in such classes. The Ministry of Education and Culture on the other hand, provides such classes to young people over 15 (and to the rest of the public), through the Adult Education Centres which provide lifelong learning opportunities at every community and youth club that shows interest to form small groups (again the tuition fees are very low).

According to the [Labour Force Survey 1999 – 2018](#), of the Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, 6649 people have been working at the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector of the economy in 2017, rather than 4290 in 2008. Segregated data provided by the Statistical Service show that 19.6% of the people who worked at the cultural sector in 2018 were young people between the age of 15-29. That is just 3.1% to the total working population in all sectors. Unfortunately, the Statistical Service of the

Republic of Cyprus does not keep records on the participation of young people aged 14-35 (which is the target group of the National Youth Strategy) in the creative and cultural industry on a paid or voluntary basis.

Main concepts

The history and culture of Cyprus date back 9 000 years to the 7th millennium BC. At the crossroads of three continents Europe, Asia and Africa and with a turbulent history with various conquerors, Cyprus has developed and for centuries maintained, its own civilization. It remained a centre of Greek culture with Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, French, Venetian, Ottoman and British influences. The maintenance, protection and preservation of the rich archaeological heritage of the island is high on the governments' priorities list. At the same time, the government prioritizes the preservation of customs and the promotion of literature, music, dance, the visual arts and the cinema amongst Cypriot citizens and abroad in order to highlight Cyprus' cultural richness and links with the international community.

Another interesting database is the [EU Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor](#) according to which the Capital of Cyprus (Nicosia) scores 21.9 on the C3 index, that is on 'Cultural Vibrancy', on 'Creative Economy' and 'Enabling Environment'. Specifically, it scores 28.7 on Cultural Vibrancy, 15.7 in Creative Economy and 21 on Enabling Environment. The Monitor is a new tool to monitor and assess the performance of European cities by using both quantitative and qualitative data in 29 indicators.

The EU Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor refers to three major facets of the cultural, social and economic vitality of the cities as follows:

- Cultural Vibrancy measures the cultural 'pulse' of a city in terms of cultural infrastructure and participation in culture;
- Creative Economy captures how the cultural and creative sectors contribute to a city's employment, job creation and innovative capacity;
- Enabling Environment identifies the tangible and intangible assets that help cities attract creative talent and stimulate cultural engagement.

All above showcase the richness of culture in the country. Nevertheless, the national legislation does not conceptualize "access to culture" nor "cultural heritage". In 1975 Cyprus signed the [UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage](#), therefore Cyprus considers as "cultural heritage" the following:

- monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

Regarding creativity as a concept, the official documents and policies strictly connect it with entrepreneurship rather than creative expression.

8.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth is the main governmental authority responsible for Creativity and Culture and specifically its [Department of Cultural Services](#).

The Cultural Services are the main actors in developing the policy of the state as regards Letters and the Arts in Cyprus, on informing the public about cultural events and their participation in them and promoting the achievements of our cultural activities abroad.

The Minister of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth is also the liaison between the Youth Board of Cyprus (state's authority on youth issues) and the rest of the Council of Ministers and government. Therefore, regarding the policies affecting young people's participation and involvement in culture, the Youth Board of Cyprus' structures and mechanisms are involved. More information on how policies for youth are decided can be found on [Chapter 1.4 Youth Policy Decision-making](#) and [1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries](#).

At the same time, policies taken at the national level are enforced locally since it's the responsibility of the central government and not of the local authorities. The local authorities are in charge with the implementation of programmes through funding they receive from the government. Moreover, youth NGO's are also funded to organise cultural events locally.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

The Department of Cultural Services cooperate with the rest of the Departments of the Ministry when it comes to cultural issues and also with different other Departments of the public administration such as the [Cyprus Department of Antiquities](#) of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works, the [Cyprus Theatre Organisation](#), [Cyprus Deputy Ministry of Tourism](#), [Cyprus Youth Symphony Orchestra](#) and the [Presidential Commissioner](#) who is managing the Service for Overseas and Repatriated Cypriots and the Religious Groups.

Under the National Youth Strategy though a new cross-sectorial partnership is being developed especially on culture and creativity policies for youth (see also [1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries](#)).

8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people

Existence of a national strategy

One of the eight fields of action of the National Youth Strategy ([Εθνική Στρατηγική για τη Νεολαία](#)) is Creativity and Culture. The National Youth Strategy was adopted in May 2017 by the Council of Ministers and it covers the period from 2017 until 2022.

Scope and contents

The Strategy states that, Culture is recognised as a major contributor to the advancement of creativeness in young people, which is considered tremendously beneficial for the whole of society on both economic and social aspects.

The development of arts and cultural activities is one of the most important means of expression for young people in Cyprus. Therefore, the Strategy targets to the promotion of the following goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Creation of opportunities for easy access and equal participation in arts and culture;

Goal 2: Creation of opportunities for the development of artistic creativity.

The National Youth Strategy priorities for achieving the above targets are the following:

1. Ensure equal access to cultural institutions (e.g. theatres, museums a.o.) and programmes for all young people;
2. Promote and support the professional development of young artists;
3. Encourage the development of new methods of cultural expression and artistic creation;

4. Create more places where young people can develop their talent and express themselves creatively (accessible to people with disabilities);
5. Enhance education and training for young professionals in culture;
6. Promote youth interaction on cultural issues with other countries;
7. Develop cooperation with youth, sports and culture institutions from other countries in order to exchange good practices in dealing with youth issues;
8. Give young people opportunities for participation in local, regional or national actions.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

The national coordinator for the drafting, implementation and monitoring of the National Youth Strategy is the Youth Board of Cyprus. For the implementation of the Strategy a Cross-sectorial Working Group on Youth is established to ensure constant coordination and close cooperation among all governmental institutions that deal with youth issues. The Cross-sectorial Working Group has developed the first 3-year Action Plan (2017-2019) which will be monitored via regular progress reports coordinated by the Youth Board of Cyprus.

Revisions/updates

The National Youth Strategy for 2017-2022 is the newest policy document and the first in its kind at the national level. Before the National Youth Strategy there was no other policy document concerning youth in culture and creativity nor the sector in general either.

8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation

Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

As already mentioned, the Youth Board of Cyprus runs the "Youth Initiatives" funding scheme which subsidizes young people and youth NGO's, youth clubs and local youth councils to utilise their own projects in different areas. Three of those areas are: Cultural Interventions, Innovation and Creativity Projects and Book Publishing.

Furthermore, the Department of Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth offers various [funding opportunities](#) together professionals in the field, NGO's, local authorities or general public, such as:

- TRANSIT SCHEME Enhancing mobility in the field of visual arts: Participation to Hospitality Programs of Artists Abroad
- Culture Programme, Sub-programmes:
 - "Popular Culture", Scheme for supporting Activities for the conservation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Traditional Tourism
 - "Visual Arts" Scheme for supporting Visual Arts and Development
 - "Cinema" Scheme for supporting Cinema Activities, Cinema Education and Training
 - "Music" Scheme for supporting Activities for Music Development
 - "Literature" Scheme for supporting Literary and writing Activities
 - "Dance" Scheme for supporting Activities in the field of Dancing
 - "Theatre" Scheme for supporting of the Theatre Creation and Development
- Support of Cultural Bodies for the Coverage of the Promotion, Communication and International Networking Needs
- Annual Grants Program for Natural Persons for their participation in cultural events/programs/activities
- Enhancement of periodical Cultural Publications

- “Terpsichore” (Τερψιχόρη) - Programme for the enhancement of Creation and Research in the field of Modern Dance
- Cultural Decentralization Program (The program aims to promote cultural decentralization through a series of quality activities taking place in rural communities)
- Editorial series with title Studies on the Modern Culture of Cyprus

The Department of Theatre Development of the Cyprus Theatre Organisation, has been engaged in ways and projects that broaden and promote theatre activity in Cyprus, in cooperation with other bodies and social groups.

The main activities of the [Department of Theatre Development](#) are the following:

- Subsidisation of performances by theatre companies which are active in Cyprus
- School theatre – Organisation of the Pancyprian Theatre School Games and workshops for teachers
- Amateur theatre – Organisation of the Pancyprian Festival of Amateur Theatre
- Organisation of Masterclasses for various theatre disciplines
- Collaboration with non-governmental organisations and groups for the promotion of activities for theatre
- Financial support of organised groups that have among their objectives the development of theatre (Cyprus Centre of the International Theatre Institute, Actors Union of Cyprus, Cyprus Playwrights Society etc.)
- Provision of information to prospective students, parents, professionals, organisations interested in the theatre in Cyprus, educational institutions, organised groups etc.

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

The main information provider to young people in Cyprus are the [Youth Information Centres](#) operated by the Youth Board of Cyprus. Therefore, information on cultural opportunities is disseminated through the Centres who are located in every city of the non occupied by Turkey part of the island. To reach out to all young persons, the Centres collaborate with the local schools, clubs and authorities who also run cultural services departments. Moreover, The YIC are the multipliers of Eurodesk Cyprus (also run by the Youth Board of Cyprus) which is responsible for the [European Youth Portal](#), thus disseminating youth targeted information on cultural opportunities and initiatives online.

The Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth have also initiated the [Portal of Cultural Information](#) programme which is incorporated in the creation of a national network of cultural information. The Portal presents artists' profile, their creative works and covers the areas of Visual Arts, Cinematography, Music, Writing and Performing Arts.

There is also the [Cyprus Music Information Centre](#) (CyMIC) established in 2008 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth and the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra Foundation with the aim to become the primary provider of specialized information, publications and music scores about the whole range of Cyprus music.

Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth either through the educational system or through the Cultural Services Department promotes awareness of the national and European cultural heritage.

As of 1st January 2011, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth participates in the Cultural Routes programme of the Council of Europe and the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA) of the Council of Europe established in April 2011.

In 2017, Cyprus and Denmark hosted the European Capital of Culture institution. Aarhus was the city in Denmark that shared the title with Pafos in 2017. The management committee of the European Capital of Culture competition in Cyprus was the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth of the Republic of Cyprus. The Programme of Events of Pafos2017 was built around three basic themed programme lines: Myth and Religion, World Travellers and Stages of the Future.

The Cultural Services promoted a large number of activities in the domain of Popular Culture. Financial support was given in the framework of the new programme CULTURE: sub-programme Popular Culture-Support of activities of traditional culture as follows:

1. Subsidisation of traditional music and dance groups with respect to their participation in events of a traditional character in Cyprus and abroad.
2. Encouragement of dance teachers and students to attend seminars in Cyprus and abroad.
3. Subsidisation of festivals by rural communities and areas with the aim to achieve decentralization.
4. Encouragement of Shadow Theatre artists.

During 2017, the Cultural Services continued to lease premises in Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca and Pafos in order to house associations that serve the letters and the arts. The associations use the Houses of the Letters and the Arts to hold assemblies, meetings, visual art exhibitions, literary events, film projections, theatre rehearsals, etc.

In its efforts to offer educational help to Greeks living in other countries, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth has proceeded with the following:

- Provision of books and other educational materials to all Greek schools and other Greek organisations on request.
- Educational camps for children of the Greek of Diaspora. The camps offer educational programmes related to the Greek language and culture.
- Provision of educational support to repatriated Cypriots and Greeks of Diaspora through programmes offered within the schools as well as by the Adult Education Centres. These programmes offer free Greek Language courses to both children and adults.
- Teaching of the Greek language to children and teachers of the Greek Orthodox schools in Jerusalem.

There is a plethora of cultural activities taking place in schools. One of the targets for the School Year 2016-17 was the exploitation of the cultural wealth of all European residents and the emergence of the common elements and the diversity of European cultures through cultural actions within the framework of the European Capital of Culture "Paphos 2017". The involvement of students in activities and other events within the context of events held during "Paphos 2017", Cultural Capital of Europe can be obtained through the [2017 Annual Report of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Sport and Youth](#).

During the Maltese as well as the Estonian Presidencies of the European Council, a plethora of important issues were put forward and the Cypriot side developed very intense action and participation in formulating issues, such as the Work Plan on Culture, the Council Conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage and the European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018).

Within the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 and UNESCO's focus, KEE UNESCO in co-operation with the ASPnet National Network Coordinator, prepared a two-year action programme: "Global Citizenship and Education for Cultural Heritage" (2018 - 2019) which included: Training of Teachers from UNESCO Associated Schools in the use of modern teaching methods for Cultural Heritage, the 41st Pancyprian Symposium of the UNESCO Network Associated Schools and participation of the UNESCO Cyprus Associated Schools in workshops about creating short documentaries.

The Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO operates under the supervision of the State as exercised by the Minister of Education and Culture through the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth provides the Commission with funding for its organizational needs and the promotion of its programmes. The Commission actively promotes the implementation of the UNESCO Conventions and Programmes in Cyprus in conjunction with all Ministries and Government Services, as well as with Non-Governmental Organisations the activities of which are related to those of UNESCO, in other words, education, culture, social studies and humanities, natural studies and communication and information.

The [Cyprus Research Centre](#) (C.R.C.) was founded in 1964 with the aim of enabling Cypriot and overseas scholars to research the history and civilisation of Cyprus and to have the conclusions of the relevant research published on a systematic basis. The C.R.C. has a specialised library covering the history and civilisation not only of Cyprus but also that of Greece, Europe and the Middle East in general.

There is also a [Creative Europe Desk in Cyprus](#) aiming at providing assistance to cultural and creative agencies regarding the Creative Europe Programme. The Desks are designed to:

- Provide information about and promote the Creative Europe programme in their country;
- Assist the cultural and creative sectors in relation to the programme and provide basic information on other support opportunities;
- Stimulate cross-border cooperation within the cultural and creative sectors;
- Provide assistance regarding the cultural and creative sectors in participating countries;
- Support the Commission in ensuring proper communication and dissemination of the results and impacts of the programme;
- Ensure the communication and dissemination of information concerning funding awarded to and results in a participating country.

8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

Young people's talents and creative skills are supported through the educational system since cultural topics are offered as obligatory subjects throughout the curriculum in the lower and upper secondary level of education. Arts, music, design & technology and literature are taught as separate subjects. Dance, theatre, photography etc are either included in other subjects or they are performed through the realisation of cultural events and the participation in relevant programmes.

At the secondary level there are specialised schools for students with a talent in music. There is only one school in every city therefore the access to all youngsters is not facilitated widely since the public transportation is limited for people living in the rural areas. At the level of upper secondary education students can also choose to attend the fine arts departments in vocational education and training system.

Adult Education Centres operate in all non-occupied by Turkey areas of the Republic of Cyprus (rural and urban), offering learning opportunities for further personal, professional, cultural and social development to thousands of adults aged 15 and over. They offer a variety of interdisciplinary courses, which focus mainly on the teaching of foreign languages, arts and crafts, cultural programmes, health and other issues of general interest, as well as on the teaching of professional and vocational skills.

As for non formal learning and youth work opportunities targeting at stimulating cultural and creative skills through funding or relevant courses you can find the information at the sub-chapter 8.4 [“Reducing obstacles to young people’s access to culture”](#) and the [“Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work”](#) of sub-chapter 6.7 (Education and Training) on Youth Wiki.

Specialised training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI), according to a Council of Ministers Decisions (August 2015, July 2017) is the official department of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth which runs teachers’ professional learning. It offers a variety of training programmes that are repetitive and compulsory for teachers, mainly because they are provided by the education laws or their service plans, or because these programmes are developed with reference to the current needs and the context of schools.

All schools of Cyprus are expected to proceed to a needs assessment procedure in order to define their specific needs. Then, according to their needs, each school organises its own training programme for the teachers, making use of plethora of training programmes offered by the Institute or elsewhere.

Such training programmes are:

- Music teachers’ in-service training programme that includes amongst others: music counselling seminars, the annual inspectors’ seminars, one-day choir conference, school networks, visits, music technology seminar, teaching resources development and implementation based on Adequacy and Attainment Targets.
- Training of Teachers from UNESCO Associated Schools in the use of modern teaching methods for Cultural Heritage within the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.
- During the school year 2017 - 2018, the Inspectors and the Art Education advisors carried out a series of actions to support the implementation and dissemination of the Visual Arts Curriculum in everyday teaching through: Teacher training, guidance and support, the development of supporting materials, continuation of the online educational platform for communication of Art Education Teachers, in the context of the Edmodo platform. Through this online community, teachers that teach visual arts have the opportunity to communicate with their peers and exchange information, lesson plans, photographic material and videos, with the purpose to enrich their knowledge bank and improve their teaching.

The Department of Educational Technology (DET) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth implements programmes of continuing professional learning in the areas of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), designs research and practice, proposes new educational implementations and promotes innovations related to the use of new technologies in education. At the same time, it provides pedagogical and technical support facilitating the effective use of ICT, including online learning, communication and management. In addition, DET implements projects that support the work of the Ministry’s ICT Unit and more specifically the Use of ICT in teaching and learning sub-unit. The focus of the activities planned and implemented is on the Education and Training 2020 European priorities as well as the Cyprus Digital Agenda. Under this scope, a lot of actions on Opening up Education through digital technologies have been taking place, with an emphasis on transversal skills needed for the digital society, as well as effective teaching and learning.

More information can be found in the [2018 Annual Report of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#).

Providing quality access to creative environments

The Youth Board of Cyprus (YBC) has introduced over the last years a number of initiatives for boosting innovation and creative skills to all young people in the island as mentioned in chapter 6 (Education and Culture) sub chapter 6.7 *Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work*. The most important are:

The Youth Leadership Academy which introduces young participants to creative ways of thinking and to ways to develop and exhibit leadership skills in order to put their innovative ideas in action.

The Youth Awards which aim at promoting and rewarding young people who have accomplished a remarkable work in their field. Two of the Awards are dedicated to Innovation and Culture.

The Youth Makerspace provides access to high quality and high-tech equipment for the development of prototypes and for the implementation of business ideas. Makerspaces around the world have democratised the fields of design, engineering, construction, creation and education.

The STEAMers program is based on the standards of S.T.E.A.M. Centers abroad. Initially, they refer to Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics. The program offers workshops in Robotics, Programming, Film Making, Photography, Graphic Design, Creative Writing, Music, Theater and Art. The workshops target children and young people aged 6 - 35 years old.

8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture

Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities

In accordance to the National Policy Statement for the Enhancement of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Cyprus (2015) the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth aims at promoting entrepreneurial mindset through the educational system as mentioned in [Chapter 3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence](#). In the same chapter information can be obtained on the enhancement of entrepreneurial activities in the public universities. There is no strategic focus to the development of entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities. This is rather acquired experientially through the cultural activities of the schools and universities.

As also mentioned in sub-chapter [8.4 Promoting Culture and cultural participation](#) there are several funding opportunities for cultural activities that stimulate entrepreneurial skills in young people. In chapter [3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs](#) there is information on entrepreneurship funding schemes that incorporate cultural activities as well.

Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

Support to young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors is provided through the funding schemes of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (sub-chapter [8.4 Promoting Culture and cultural participation](#)) and the Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry (sub-chapter [3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs](#)).

8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth has set high priority on the integration and exploitation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the educational process as well as on the development of those technologies that will advance school administrative procedures.

The ICT in the Learning Process sector of the newly established ICT Unit aims at the use of digital technologies to support teaching and learning. To pursue this goal, it maintains the promotion of continuous professional learning programmes, online portals with open educational resources, e-learning and blended learning supported by learning management systems, online communities of practice, school-based programmes and competitions, participation in European and research programmes, coordination of the safer internet programme, and the promotion, in general, of innovations related to the use of new technologies in education.

During 2018, the aim of the ICT in the Learning Process sector has been supported by the activities of the CPI Educational Technology Department. At the same time, under the collaboration with the Ministry's Departments of Education (Primary, Secondary General and Technical and Vocational), a policy towards the internet access in schools is being planned, including WiFi radiation measurements in schools along with the implementation of a safe internet filter provided by Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CYTA). In addition, in collaboration with Microsoft, training was provided for school academies. The actions focus on the Education and Training 2020 European priorities as well as the Cyprus Digital Agenda. Under this scope the following actions on Opening up Education through digital technologies have been taking place during the year 2018, covering the following areas:

- Use of Digital Technologies in teaching and learning.
- Creative, safe and responsible use of the internet.
- Transversal and digital skills for pupils and teachers.

During the 2017-2018 school year the ongoing effort of supporting as many schools as possible and exploiting the existing computer equipment in the most productive way was continued. In all Lycea and Gymnasia (that is secondary education) there are IT labs for the purpose of teaching all computer science courses.

Moreover, during the past few years, the syllabi of all IT courses taught at Secondary Education Level schools have been updated in order to meet European standards and current trends. This was pursued as it is one of the objectives of the National Coalition for Digital Skills and Jobs. Therefore, in all Gymnasia, IT courses are mandatory for all students and are taught for two periods per week in each of the three classes. The main objective of these courses is for pupils to cover material of European standards (ECDL). In addition, students are taught IT essentials and basic concepts of algorithm development and computer programming. In the A' Lyceum class, the IT course is mandatory for all students and is taught for two periods per week. Its objective is to introduce students to computer science. In B' and C' classes of the Lyceum there are three elective IT courses (Computer Science, Computer Applications and Networking/CISCO) which are taught for four periods per week.

Source: [2018 Annual Report of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#).

According to a [Council of Ministers Decision in 2018](#), students of the B class of Gymnasium, that are supported by public income, were allowed to a subsidy of 400 euros to buy a laptop.

In cooperation with various organizations such as the University of Cyprus (UCY), the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT), the Cyprus Computer Society, the Society of Computer Science Teachers in Secondary Education, CYTA, Microsoft, and so on, the following actions were held during the 2017-2018 school year:

- Cyprus Olympiad in Informatics;
- Cyprus Competition for creating Educational Games (LogiPaigion) for Secondary Education pupils.

All public universities offer online student information services, free wifi and some offer e-learning classes and of course the Open University of Cyprus provides online courses at

different levels. Some of the [courses of the Open University of Cyprus](#) connected to culture or new technologies are:

- Theatre Studies
- Studies in Hellenic Culture
- Cultural Policy and Development
- Communication and new Journalism

The [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#) offers a subsidy up to 500 euros to each new university student for acquiring a computer or for upgrading one. The subsidy is given to the students according to their social and financial status.

The Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) excels in the promotion of new technologies. Recent successes include two ERC strategic projects totalling 3.3 million Euros, two “Teaming for Excellence” research proposals led by the CUT, which ensured the highest pan-European rating and participation in the creation of a RISE Excellence Centre for technological and business innovation. CUT University operates the [CUTing Edge: An American Space](#) which aims to provide an inspirational place where people can relax and embrace technology, become innovators and present their work to the worldwide community.

Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

There are limited initiatives that facilitate access to culture through new technologies such as:

- The Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth have created the [Portal of Cultural Information](#) programme which is incorporated in the creation of a national network of cultural information. The Portal presents artists’ profile, their creative works and covers the areas of Visual Arts, Cinematography, Music, Writing and Performing Arts.
- In November 2017 UNESCO approved the application submitted by the Cyprus Technological University/ Digital Heritage Workshop for the creation of a third [UNESCO Chair in Limassol](#) on “Digital Cultural Heritage”.
- Cyprus University of Technology has started a new project, the [iMARECULTURE](#) which will address the challenges of bringing the underwater (UW) cultural heritage (CH) into public attention as something more tangible, while raising awareness about European identity. Project aims to overcome the limitations of time and space using Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR), along with Serious Games. Several actions and tasks will help to the goal, such as two Serious Games with interactive storytelling, Dry visits in museums using Holographic screens, Head Mount Devices (HMD) or VR caves, and AR in UW tablets for divers in underwater archaeological parks.

8.8 Synergies and partnerships

Synergies between public policies and programmes

As mentioned in *sub chapter 8.2 on Cross-sectoral cooperation*.

Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers

There are no national policies or programmes fostering partnerships between the stakeholders of the culture and creative sector with youth NGO’s and youth workers besides a [collaboration of the Cyprus Theatre Organisation \(THOC\) with non-governmental organisations and groups](#) for the promotion of activities for theatre (Theatricalon Katafygio).

8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities

The special education schools for children with visual or hearing problems offer a variety of artistic opportunities to their students but also training opportunities in arts professions. They also organise events where the general public participate thus fostering social integration and building their self- confidence.

The [Cyprus Theatre Organisation](#) offers different programmes that give access to young people to cultural activities such as:

- The 1st Youth Platform which is one of the parallel actions of Dubitanda (1st Quarter Actions, THOC Warehouses), and was created to give a step forward to young Cypriot creators who are engaged in or interested in exploring the contemporary practices of stage performance. The Platform is not only for theatre artists but also for creators (individuals or groups) from all the arts of performing arts who want to create and present a complete proposal on the stage;
- Low cost tickets to young people for theatre performances;
- Annual Pancyprian school theatre competition.

The [Foundation of Cultural Creation for Children and Youth](#) is located in the city of Larnaca and was founded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The aim of the Foundation is "the coexistence of Arts", in a place for children and adolescents, and generally young people of all ages, while providing support to individuals and groups sharing this vision.

Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

The school, as a carrier of state policy is called upon to implement anti-racist policy, which recognizes the diversity as the most basic component of the school community, which should operate as a mechanism for the social inclusion of children with any type of diversity. Therefore, different activities are initiated by schools such as:

- The art project entitled "Immigrants", created by students from the Kolossi High School "Apostolos Loukas", won the overall Saatchi Gallery/Deutsche Bank art prize for schools, as well as the award for the secondary school category, and is among the 50 winners of the European Parliament's European Citizen's Prize 2016.
- Theatrical performances whose topic is issues faced by immigrants and political refugees.
- Participating in European programmes e. g 'Positive Images', 'Innovation against discrimination', 'Comenius` (with the theme of Intercultural Education, equal opportunities and Human Rights, UN (Human Rights), EARIL (Intercultural Education) etc.
- Film and theatrical viewing relevant to social problems and discussion about the part of citizenship on resolving them (e.g. short film "Life lessons") related to xenophobia and social exclusion (or isolation).

Moreover, as already mentioned in sub-chapter [8.5 Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training](#) the Adults Education Centres offered in rural and urban areas is a basic programme that facilitates young people's (over 15) participation in cultural activities and life long learning opportunities. A lot of youth clubs, which are mainly organised in small villages, take advantage of the programme thus offering it, in this way, especially to young people.

Meanwhile, the Youth Initiatives programme of the Youth Board of Cyprus (mentioned also in sub-chapter [8.4 Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture](#)) gives access

to young people and youth NGO's to funding in order to realise their own cultural activities and offer them to other young people either for free or on a very low cost.

8.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

In 2018, the Chairman of the Administrative Board of the Youth Board of Cyprus (YBC) had announced the launch of the programme "[STEAM Schools](#)" which aims at developing young people's soft skills such as communication, analytical and critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork and creativity. The programs also aim at developing young people's interest in Science and Technology in a holistic manner. In order to set the foundations right, the YBC has launched a series of programmes, namely the STEAMers, the Youth Makerspace and the Mobile Makerspace, to prepare both infrastructures and soft resources for the launch of the comprehensive STEAM School project.

A few months later, the YBC submitted a policy proposal to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth and the Council of Ministers, highlighting the benefits of STEAM education and requesting for the adoption of the concept by the relevant Ministry. The paper was approved and the YBC presented the proposal in June 2019, as one of the [three new pioneering projects](#) being introduced by the YBC and the government.

At the same time, STEAM philosophy will be one of the founding principles and main programmes of the National Youth Centre which was also presented as one of the [new projects](#) of the YBC that will be developed in the forthcoming future.

Ongoing debates

A Commission to prepare a study for the creation of a Sub-Ministry for Culture was established by the Ministry of Education and Culture. An announcement was made by the former Minister, Mr. Kostas Champiaouris, in 2018. As the Minister noted, the Commission will be chaired by the Director of the Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth and the aim of the effort is to create an autonomous administrative structure dedicated to the enhancement of cultural creation and the promotion of cultural heritage. The proposal (which is being developed as of 2019) will eventually be submitted to the Council of Ministers for adoption and implementation.

9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

One of the main targets of the [National Youth Strategy 2017-2022](#) (Εθνική στρατηγική για τη νεολαία 2017-2022), is to reinforce the role of young people in the democratic process in Cyprus. One of its main action fields is “Youth and the world” where specific priorities are set and several topics from the global agenda, such as the climate change, the human rights and the UN Sustainable Development Goals are being addressed.

There are several campaigns or initiatives taking place in Cyprus over the last years for different age groups. However, there is a need for top-level policies, initiatives and/or programmes addressed especially to young people with the aim to engage and inform them about global issues that concern them and to encourage them to participate in international exchanges with other young people and relevant stakeholders.

9.1 General context

Main concepts

The [National Youth Strategy 2017-2022](#) (Εθνική στρατηγική για τη νεολαία 2017-2022), developed and published by the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) (YBC), has as main target to reinforce the role of young people in the democratic process in Cyprus. Therefore, some of the main action fields of the National Strategy are participation, representation and social inclusion of young people. The policy document in its relevant chapter “Youth and the world” sets as priorities key topics from the global agenda, such as the climate change, the human rights and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

More specifically the goals of the field of action are:

Target 1: Creation and exploitation of mobility opportunities.

Target 2: Development of a global and ecological consciousness and culture.

The National Youth Strategy priorities for achieving the above targets are the following:

1. Increase youth participation in international networks and improve the cooperation among organisation within the EU and beyond.
2. Make the most out of exchange programmes (education, training, exchange of ideas).
3. Enhance access to information and empowerment for capitalising on youth mobility programmes (e.g. Erasmus+).
4. Facilitate youth participation in mobility programmes.
5. Create more opportunities for education and training on issues relating to modern societies (e.g. human rights, refugee issue, environmental topics, climate change, sustainable development).
6. Create opportunities for coexistence and cooperation among different nationalities, communities and religions.
7. Implement further measures for enhancing sustainable development in the country.

Youth interest in global issues

The most recent survey in relation to the topic was the “Current Situation of Young People in Cyprus” ([Η Υφιστάμενη Κατάσταση των Νέων στην Κύπρο](#)) which was conducted by [KPMG](#) on behalf of the YBC. In the survey, it has been underlined that 71% of the young people who took part in the research, never participated in any kind of young people exchanges with other European (or third countries). A primary reason for that is the lack

of relevant information for international activities. Therefore, a main challenge for the Cypriot youth is to enhance their interest and participation in decision-making process and raise their awareness on global issues.

Since 2017, the Youth Board of Cyprus funds annually the implementation of the programme “Parliament of Young Representatives” (Βουλή των Νέων Αντιπροσώπων) that provides opportunities to young people’s active participation in national, European and global-related issues, by involving young people in the policy making process. During the first, second and third Parliament of young representatives in 2016, 2017 and 2019, some of the main topics included in the young people’s final policy proposals (Υπομνήματα, Εκθέσεις Κοινοβουλευτικών Επιτροπών) included recommendations for global related issues like education’s improvements and employment, environmental and green policies, etc.

9.2 Administration and governance

Governance

On governmental level, the most important body for defining policies on youth and other related issues is the [Council of Ministers](#) which approves all important decisions. However, the development and implementation of policies concerning youth and the world is under the jurisdiction of the [European and International Issues Office](#) of the Cyprus [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#) which is the main responsible department of the Ministry for the implementation of the EU and International policies for youth in Cyprus, in collaboration with the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) (YBC), which is also the main advisory body for the promotion and identification of youth related policies and measures.

In addition, different public authorities are involved in international cooperation and activities for young people according to the topic of interest, such as the Ombudsman offices and other Ministries. Especially the offices of the the [Commissioner for the Environment](#) and the [Commissioner for Volunteerism and Non-Governmental Organizations](#) are important institutions in their fields of interest and youth initiatives.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

The [National Youth Strategy](#) incorporates the [mechanism for cross-sectorial cooperation](#) between Ministries, Departments, Agencies involved in defining policies and measures regarding youth's contribution to global processes of policy-making, implementation and follow-up, including youth cooperation at the global level.

9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level

The [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) Law includes legal provisions and guidelines on youth consultation. In particular, the law contains the establishment of Advisory Bodies and clearly says that the Council should seek and take seriously into consideration the recommendations made by the Advisory Bodies on matters that it examines and fall under its jurisdiction. The Advisory Body is there to express views and submit suggestions regarding general principles of youth policy. Taking into consideration that the Youth Board of Cyprus shall advise, through the Minister of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth the Council of Ministers about the configuration of a comprehensive and specialized policy on youth matters”, this consultation mechanism is across all policy areas directly influencing the situation of young people.

Regarding the exchanges between young people and policy makers on global issues, the latest initiative that took place was the involvement of young people in the whole process

of developing and monitoring the [National Youth Strategy 2017-2022](#) which dedicates a field of action on Youth and the World.

However, among the society of active citizens, there are various exchanges of youth workers, young people and policymakers under the [Erasmus+ Programme](#) (e.g. through the method of [structured dialogue](#)) for exchanging views and recommendations on key topics that concern young people.

More specifically, the [Annual Report 2018](#) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth mentions that in 2018 the Structured Dialogue process (since 2019 it is called [EU Youth Dialogue](#)) continued, based on the guidelines of the European Steering Committee for Structured Dialogue which consists of the [European Youth Forum](#), the [Presidency](#) and the [European Commission](#). All member states which have a National Group for Structured Dialogue are involved in this process. In Cyprus, the National Group for Structured Dialogue consists of representatives of the [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#), the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) and the Cyprus Youth Council, and it is coordinated by the [Cyprus Youth Council](#). In the context of this process, many consultations were held in urban and rural areas as well as meetings among representatives of the Group for Structured Dialogue, to plan actions and analyse the consultation results.

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level

The [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) is run by a seven-member Administrative Board which consists of youth representatives. As the competent national authority on youth issues (a) it participates in international youth organizations' meetings and develops bilateral contacts with respective youth bodies of other countries in order to be informed regarding the international development youth matters; (b) It stipulates protocols/programmes of cooperation with corresponding youth bodies of other countries for the achievement of the Board's aims and (c) funds the participation of young people and youth representatives such as members of the National Youth Council for their participation in international forums through the '[Youth Initiatives Project](#)'.

Moreover, the first 3-year Action Plan of the National Youth Strategy states that under the priority "International cooperation in the field of youth", the following objectives are set: (a) Active involvement in shaping advances and processes which take place at international youth policy-making centres; (b) Developing and maintaining Youth Board of Cyprus' relations with the international community and promoting the Organization abroad; with a view to enhancing cooperation in the youth field. In this way, participation in international seminars and workshops, representation in international forums and conferences as well as memberships in international organisations is considered important.

However, based on the [Annual Report 2018](#) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, the Youth Board of Cyprus, through its Board members and staff, participated in several important European and international meetings, conferences and activities on youth related issues. These are:

1. Participation in Working Groups on Youth Related Issues: The YBC participates in the Working Groups on Youth related issues that are held in Brussels during each Presidency of the European Council, as well as in Youth Conferences and in General Directors' meetings that are hosted by each Presidency.
2. Participation at the [European Steering Committee for Youth](#) (CDEJ): The YBC participates at the meetings of the Steering Committee for Youth of the Council of Europe twice a year, where policies and other youth related issues are discussed and strategies are put forward in the member states. The Director of the YBC is one of the members of the Bureau of the CDEJ.
3. [European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy](#) (EKCY) of the Council of Europe: The YBC attends the annual meetings of the national correspondents of the Centre to monitor the drafting and implementation of national youth policies.

4. **United Nations (UN)**: The YBC participates in the international conventions and forums organized by the UN, as the UN youth policies and initiatives are taken into serious consideration by the YBC in its National Youth Strategy. In 2018 and 2019, the YBC and Cypriot youth representatives participated in the following UN events: a) The UN Winter Youth Assembly, b) the 7th **Youth Forum of ECOSOC** (United Nations Economic and Social Council), which took place in New York, c) the Youth Summit on Youth Dialogue and d) The **World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth 2019 and Youth Forum Lisboa+21**.
5. **Commonwealth**: The YBC encourages young people's participation in the **Commonwealth Youth Forum** providing financial and other kinds of support. In 2018, the YBC participated in two Commonwealth youth events that aimed at drafting a road map for a holistic development and promotion of employment for young people in Cyprus. The events were the Commonwealth Higher Education Youth Work Consortium Workshop and the 3rd Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work.

In addition, in 2017 the YBC organised the international conference "**Youth Cooperation for Peace (You Coop): Building Bridges to counter radicalization and extremism**" which was held in Nicosia with 30 participants aged 18-35 years old on 13-14 December 2017. The conference was organised with the cooperation of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and the **Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth** and it was attended by young people from Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar and Slovakia, who exchanged ideas on finding new ways to promote tolerance, understanding and the fight against stereotypes. The conference focused on two main topics: 1) recognition / exposure of youth policies' contribution towards extremism and radicalisation; 2) creation of tolerant societies that promote a peace culture.

9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

Formal, non-formal and informal learning

Formal learning

In the Cypriot upper-secondary schools, general aspects of global issues are included in the school subject of Modern Greek (**Νέα Ελληνική Γλώσσα Μέσης Γενικής Εκπαίδευσης**) where students discuss about cross-thematic topics while they develop their critical thinking and argumentation skills. In addition, topics such as sustainable development, recycling and environmental protection as well as consumer education are also covered through the subject of Home Economics (**Μάθημα Οικιακής Οικονομίας Μέσης Γενικής Εκπαίδευσης**).

Additionally, the **Annual Report 2017** of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth mentions that the Council of Europe Programme "**Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights**" (EDC/HR) is being implemented. The programme is included in the Council of Europe framework of activities and covers all the activities and actions that have been planned to help both the young and adults to participate actively in a democratic life, demanding all their rights but also undertaking all the responsibilities allocated to them. The objective of the programme is to reinforce the democratic institutions by adopting an intense democratic culture, by emphasizing the feeling for participation, and commitment but in addition also the acceptance of basic essential values for the creation of a free, tolerant and fair society at a national as well as European level. In Cypriot schools, EDC is offered together with History lessons, but it is also integrated into the entire curriculum, and activities or functions of Cypriot schools. It includes concepts such as 'education for peace', 'universal (or global) education', 'intercultural education', 'democratization' and participation in public affairs.

Another programme in which Cypriot schools participate is the SEMEP (**South-Eastern Mediterranean sea Project**) which is an interdisciplinary environmental education project

focusing primarily on the South Eastern Mediterranean sea region and coordinated by UNESCO. Member countries include Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Romania, Slovenia, and Turkey. The project promotes environmental education through science and intercultural dialogue in the region and involves students at the upper primary and secondary levels in both formal and non-formal sectors. It provides an opportunity to consider environmental issues that are of common concern to countries in the South Eastern Mediterranean region. Within the framework of existing school curricula, the project encourages a multitude of science and technology educational approaches in favour of sustainable development, such as problem identification and problem solving, hands-on activities, and determining decision making parameters.

The [Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Programme](#) is a fully funded intensive short-term exchange programme for upper secondary school students, created to foster relationships among young Europeans and Americans to build strong linkages and awareness of shared values. The four-week program enables teenagers, ages 16-18, to explore U.S. foreign policy priorities such as youth engagement, support for democracy and civil society, and economic prosperity. The programme is funded by the U.S. Government and in Cyprus, it is coordinated by the U.S. Embassy in Cyprus.

Non-formal and informal learning

The [Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth](#), the [Cyprus Pedagogical Institute](#), the [Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment](#) and many more actors took part in the initiative "Rethink (reduce, reuse, recycle)" ([Εκστρατεία ευαισθητοποίησης RETHINK – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle για τη μείωση, επαναχρησιμοποίηση και ανακύκλωση των αποβλήτων στην Κύπρο](#)). The initiative lasted from 2014 to 2017. Its main target was to train and sensitize people in changing their waste habits and promote a significant change on how the society manages its own waste. The programme's target group was the entire active population of the country, including young people and it was funded by the [LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance programme of the EU](#).

Another important campaign is the annual initiative "Let's Do it Cyprus", organized since 2012 by the Commissioner for the Environment ([Γραφείου Επιτρόπου Περιβάλλοντος](#)). The campaign is part of the global initiative "Let's Do it World" and in Cyprus, the volunteers are called to contribute in cleaning the island's most important natural sights like beaches, city parks and natural forest and mountain parks. The initiative has as its main target group, among others, young people and it is co-funded by the Ombudsman on environmental issues and other private sponsors.

The programme [#LifeStories](#) aims also to promote common European values, such as democracy, solidarity, and respect for human rights, through the work of Role Models. The Role Models, are young people that can serve as inspiring examples by making these common values part of their everyday life and thus, promote inclusive societies. Those people share their stories with others through inspiring speeches during events organized in the framework of the programme. The programme was organized by the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) between July and December 2018 and was funded by the [Erasmus+ programme](#).

Educators' support

There is no top-level programme or action for teachers, trainers, non-formal education workers and youth workers for continuous training and certification related to the promotion of global issues among young people in Cyprus, in general.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth's special unit called "[Δίκτυο Κέντρων Περιβαλλοντικής Εκπαίδευσης](#)" organises various programmes for raising awareness specifically on topics related to environmental education and sustainable development in the framework of formal, non-formal and informal learning. The unit has also developed useful educational materials ([Επιμόρφωση](#)) in various environmental and sustainable development topics.

Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues

There are not major information campaigns with the goal of promoting the knowledge and understanding of global issues among young people directly conducted or funded by top-level authorities. There are several individual campaigns on various issues addressing the whole population in the island, not just young people. The most important, they are mentioned in the previous section.

Information providers

There are several public authorities that disseminate information on various global issues among young people in Cyprus. These are:

- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth;
- The Youth Board of Cyprus which is publishing on its official website or on the social media (e.g. Facebook page) any important information on youth global issues;
- The Commissioner for the Environment;
- The Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGO's.

Key initiatives

The most important initiatives are stated [above](#) in the sections of Formal, Non-formal and informal learning.

9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption

Green volunteering

As mentioned in the [section 9.4](#), the initiative "Let's Do it Cyprus" promotes also green volunteering among young people. Similar campaign is the **WEGREEN CYPRUS** (Πρασινίζουμε την Κύπρο) which acts for the reforestation and recuperation of natural sights destroyed by the catastrophic forest fires during summer of 2016. The Offices of the [Commissioner for the Environment](#) and the [Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGO's](#) organize this program, together with the [Department of Forests](#) and other relevant public authorities. The programme is financed by private and public donations and its operational needs are covered totally through voluntary work. The target group of the programme is the entire population in Cyprus, including young people.

Green production and consumption

There are no main top-level policies, programmes, projects or initiatives that foster young people's participation in green production and consumption apart from the ones mentioned [above](#) and in sub-chapter 9.4 on *Non-formal and informal learning*.

9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

Intercontinental youth work cooperation

There are no main top-level policies, programmes, projects or initiatives in Cyprus that promote cooperation, including exchanges, between individuals or organisations that are active in youth work in more than one continent. Some exchanges are taking place under the [Erasmus+ Programme](#) and more specifically, the [Capacity Building activities for youth](#).

Development cooperation activities

There are no main programmes or actions that aim to encourage young people to participate in development cooperation activities in their own country or abroad.

9.7 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

The [National Youth Strategy 2017-2022 \(NYS\)](#) (Εθνική στρατηγική για τη νεολαία 2017-2022) encourages the adoption of top-level measures by many public bodies that address key topics, such as active participation, non-formal learning, international mobility and youth global issues.

The first three-year Action Plan of the National Youth Strategy, covering the period 2017 – 2019, is completed and it has been discussed in open consultations with youth as mentioned in [chapter 1](#). Their recommendations will be taken into account whilst preparing the second Action Plan (2020-2022) which will again include all the programmes and actions that the governmental authorities should implement for the next three years in order to achieve the priorities and objectives of the National Youth Strategy.

In 2019, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order has initiated two consultation processes:

1. For the development of a National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights where the Youth Board of Cyprus is a key stakeholder in regards to the inclusion of young people's views and interests;
2. For the preparation of a youth declaration on corruption following the adoption of the National Action Plan against Corruption in May 2019, by the Council of Ministers.

What's more, as part of the "No Hate Speech" campaign of the Council of Europe, the Youth Board of Cyprus had set up a National Coordination Committee with representatives from NGOs and government departments. There are plans to re-establish the Coordination Team, under more extended terms of reference, to cover the youth sector strategy 2030 of the Council of Europe which concerns the thematic priorities of "revitalising pluralistic democracy", "access to rights", "living together in peaceful and inclusive societies" and "youth work".

Ongoing debates

No ongoing debates are taking place in the public and/or political sphere except from the development of the Action Plan of the National Youth Strategy. There are still a lot of policies and strategies to be established to address the above issues in Cyprus.

10. YOUTH WORK

Youth work is a field highly appreciated in the field of youth. The Youth Board of Cyprus, as the competent agency for youth in the country, implements a number of policies in order to reinforce it, increase its quality and raise awareness about it. All these policies are described in the chapter, showcasing the importance given by the Government.

At the same time, the recognition of youth work is an emerging policy field in the country. Although a formal recognition system does not yet exist in Cyprus, a lot of efforts are currently taking place in order to define and recognize youth work, the youth workers and the skills acquired through youth work. The Youth Board of Cyprus, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, as well as the Human Resource Development Agency and the Cyprus Youth Council take the leading roles in this process. Thus, this chapter also illustrates the relevant parts of the strategies pertaining to recognition of youth work.

10.1 General context

Historical developments

In 1968 the first club of [Cyprus Youth Clubs Associations](#) appears. This creates a cascading effect of new clubs being established one after the other, especially between the years 1975-1985. Over the years, the Cyprus Youth Clubs organization grew into a wide network of more than 85 clubs all over Cyprus.

In 1994, the [Youth Board of Cyprus](#) is established. The Youth Board of Cyprus is the [National Authority for Youth](#). It offers a variety of youth work programmes and funding schemes for youth work. The Youth Board of Cyprus is also the top-level authority responsible for the coordination and monitoring of the National Youth Strategy.

In 1996, the [Cyprus Youth Council](#) (CYC) was founded as a volunteer, non – governmental, non – profit organization. The CYC aims at promoting dialogue and cooperation between youth in Cyprus and also connecting them with youth in Europe and globally. The CYC seeks to act as a platform of exchange and communication between all youth NGOs in Cyprus.

In the meantime, a lot of non-governmental organizations are established. Yet, until 2007, there is no clear understanding of the definition of youth work. On page 42, the document [Youth policy in Cyprus - Conclusions of the Council of Europe](#) international review prepared in 2007 mentions that “there appeared in Cyprus to be a rather limited theoretical understanding of the idea of ‘youth work’ and an empirical lack of space for its provision or development.” It seems that the understanding of youth work is highly blended with non-formal learning and leisure activities for youth.

However, the international review mentions that “the issues that are routinely addressed in ‘youth work’ practice are legion: sexuality, health, internationalism and multiculturalism, as well as debates around vocational pathways or opportunities for trips away from home. Many of these issues are already addressed within schools, at the Youth Information Centres or through school camping trips.”

In December 2016, the National Youth Council of Cyprus, organized the conference “[Recognition of YOUTH WORKer](#)”. The Conference was funded by the Erasmus+ programme and aimed at empowering young people to discuss with policy makers about the recognition of the Youth Worker. They also analyzed best practices implemented in other European countries making the institution of Youth Worker recognizable while understanding the significance of its role in the development of non-formal education skills.

Following the seminar, in 2017 the Cyprus Youth Council releases a policy paper about the recognition of youth worker. The same year, the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) launches a consultation process for developing standards of vocational

qualifications of the youth worker. This process of consultation includes the Youth Board of Cyprus and the Cyprus Youth Council.

Last, in 2019, as part of the Council of Europe's support measures to its Member States on youth policy issues, the Youth Board of Cyprus hosted a team of experts from the Council of Europe. The experts, after making several consultations and meetings with stakeholders in the youth field, will guide the Youth Board in developing a national road map for the holistic development and recognition of youth work in Cyprus.

National definition or understanding of Youth Work

At this moment, there is still no official National definition of Youth Work. The only available definition of youth work is the one introduced by the Cyprus Youth Council in the policy paper about the recognition of youth worker. According to this, "youth work is any planned programme and activity of personal and social education, which is based on the values of non formal education and is designed to improve the skills and competencies of young people, outside of the formal educational curriculum". In addition to that, the same policy paper defines the youth worker as "the person who systematically empowers young people using non-formal learning in order to develop personally and socio-economically, taking into consideration their needs, on a voluntary or professional basis."

One could say that these definitions conceptualize well enough the common understanding of youth work in Cyprus. Therefore, the overall understanding of youth work embeds the following elements:

- Youth work uses educational activities, recreational activities, volunteering activities, social and political actions to empower young people;
- Youth work is based on non-formal and informal learning and voluntary participation;
- The main providers of youth work are youth organisations and youth clubs;
- Young people is the target of youth work, but emphasis is given for young people with fewer opportunities.

10.2 Administration and governance of youth work

The main actor involved in policy-making on youth work is the Youth Board of Cyprus. auspices of the . According to the [Youth Board's Law](#), the Administrative Board of the Youth Board of Cyprus advises the Council of Ministers through the Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, for the development of a comprehensive and targeted youth policy that promotes the following aims:

- the progress and prosperity of all young people of Cyprus, regardless of ethnicity origin or religion
- the provision of opportunities to all young people and their organizations for participation and for taking responsibility in the social, economic and cultural development
- the creative engagement of young people in Cyprus
- the immediate and effective encounter of the problems youth are facing.

Apart from the Youth Board of Cyprus, the [Commissioner of Volunteering and NGOs](#) is one of the main public actors involved in the field. The Commissioner is assigned by the President of Cyprus and its 2018-2023 mandate includes coordination and support to all voluntary and non-governmental organizations, many of which do youth work.

The main non-public actors involved are the Cyprus Youth Council, the Cyprus Youth Clubs Organization and the Municipal and Community Youth Councils:

1. **Cyprus Youth Council:** In a nutshell, the Cyprus Youth Council's role is to voice the concerns of youth NGOs including lobbying to policy makers for a number of youth related issues.
2. **Municipal and Community Youth Councils:** The role of the Municipal and Community Youth Councils is to advise their local authorities and recommend solution-policies and actions in regard to problems that young people face in relation to the community.
3. **Cyprus Youth Clubs Organisation:** This is the largest non-governmental youth non-profit organization in Cyprus. Youth Clubs are youth organizations that provide creative engagement, information and entertainment opportunities to young people and are open to all youth. They collaborate closely with the Youth Board of Cyprus in order to reach better the young people all over the country, especially in rural areas.

Regarding the general distribution of responsibilities between top-level and regional/local authorities, for every youth work programme, the Youth Board of Cyprus collaborates with the respective local authority for its implementation.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

Cross-sectoral cooperation between the Youth Board of Cyprus, the Human Resource Development Agency, the Commissioner of Volunteerism and NGOs, the local authorities, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports and the main non-public actors involved in youth work is ensured through the National Youth Strategy. The National Youth Strategy endorses a strong **cross-sectoral cooperation** between the above mentioned parties that stretches also in the field of youth work.

Moreover, the help line 1410 of the Youth Board of Cyprus coordinates all help lines concerning young people in Cyprus. Although each help line is run by different organizations (governmental and non-governmental) and focuses on different topics (addictions, psychological support, violence, etc.), the 2015 report underlines the importance of coordinating all help lines under the common umbrella of 1410. This ensures again a cross-sectoral cooperation between all actors involved in this specific field of youth work.

10.3 Support to youth work

Policy legal framework

There are not any top-level policies and regulations on youth work, nor a specific strategy on youth work in Cyprus.

Funding

The public funding is made available to support youth work through the **Youth Initiatives Project**, offered by the Youth Board of Cyprus.

The source of this funding is the government. According to the **Youth Board of Cyprus Budget Law of 2019**, the Youth Initiatives Project real expenses on 2017 were 975.360 euros. The amount of funding earmarked for the Project in 2018 was 943.804 euros and in 2019 was 842.265 euros.

In order to benefit from the funding, youth work providers need to fill in an application explaining what they aim to do. The Youth Initiatives Project offers direct financial support to Youth Coordination Bodies such as the Cyprus Youth Council and the Cyprus Youth Clubs Organization. In order to benefit from the funding, the coordination bodies need to fill in a special application form which must be accompanied with the annual report and the New Year's plan and budget.

The types of activities of the Youth Initiatives Project are identified in the chapter "Participation" of the Youth Wiki and specifically on sub-chapter 5.6. There are not specific target groups to be supported. All youth are covered by the programme.

The funds used for the Youth Initiatives Project come directly from the government's budget. EU funds are used primarily within the Erasmus+ programme which offers opportunities for youth work on European and national level.

Cooperation

The Youth Board of Cyprus, being the national authority for youth, has established a framework of cooperation with the following actors:

- civil society organisations active in the field of youth work, in this case primarily the Cyprus Youth Council. As previously said, the Youth Board of Cyprus works closely with the Cyprus Youth Council in order to develop the standards of vocational qualifications of the youth worker.
- public services dedicated to young people. This cooperation is safeguarded in the framework of the National Youth Strategy which embeds a cross-sectoral committee and binds all actors involved to closely cooperate on youth issues.
- youth workers and practitioners in the youth field, as well as researchers and experts in the field of youth work. This cooperation was especially promoted in the framework of the visit of the Council of Europe experts team in Cyprus. During the meeting, youth workers were invited to share their point of view on the current needs of the youth work field in Cyprus. In addition to that, the experts had a meeting with professors from the University of Cyprus, discussing the possibility of offering new educational programmes on youth work.
- private organisations and social enterprises. Employers and private sector representatives are part of the consultation process of developing standards of vocational qualifications of the youth worker.

10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work

Quality assurance

There are not any existing systems of quality assurance applying to youth work in Cyprus.

Research and evidence supporting Youth Work

There are no research and evidence supporting youth work in Cyprus.

Participative Youth Work

Young people can participate in the design of youth work programmes and initiatives by taking part in the consultation processes that the Youth Board of Cyprus organises in the framework of the National Youth Strategy. More precisely, the Youth Board of Cyprus in 2018 run a comprehensive consultation process with young people in order to prepare the Action Plan of the National Youth Strategy, during which a lot of ideas for youth programmes and initiatives were given. In the framework of the National Youth Strategy, another consultation process will be launched soon for developing the second Action Plan (2020-2022). This will be an ongoing process guaranteeing the engagement of young people in the policies and actions that concern them.

Smart youth work: youth work in the digital world

Some of the top-level policies and measures enabling and fostering the application of digital technologies to youth work in Cyprus are:

- [Help Line 1410](#) offered by the Youth Board of Cyprus. This is the first Help Line which has operated in Cyprus since 1990. It is dialed by people in search for responsible

answers on daily life matters, but also on more complex issues such as addictive substances, family relationships, peer relationships, school bullying, stress, depression, grief etc.

- **E-Counselling** offered by the Youth Board of Cyprus. E-Counselling is the web-site of 1410 Service. It handles the same issues and follows the same principles and professional deontology. What differs is the counselling process. Instead of talking on the phone, youth can chat with a counselor through your pc or smart phone. E-Counseling counselors handle all the cases with confidentiality and professionalism, regardless of gender, origin, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation, as done on 1410 Help Line. The conversation with the counselor through the software is confidential and no one else has access to it.
- **Youth Information Centres**: The Youth Information Centres (YIC) operate along the standards of Youth Information Centres of Europe and the guidelines of the European Youth and Information Counseling Agency (ERYICA). The main purpose of the centres is to provide general information on a wide range of youth related issues in a comfortable, modern and friendly environment. YIC offer information and guidance on the Youth Board of Cyprus' programmes and services, information about workshops and other recreational, social and sports events and about European opportunities for young people. This information sharing takes the shape of an offline counseling which then leads to further online research and communication.
- **Eurodesk**: Eurodesk's main purpose is to provide information on European policies and opportunities that interest young people or youth workers, such as mobility, volunteering, exchanges, work, internships, non-formal learning and much more. Eurodesk, is the main source of youth information on European policies, mobility information and opportunities in the country. It answers enquiries and provides guidance for mobile young people across Europe. Eurodesk updates and manages digital content and also answers enquiries coming from youth.
- In addition to these, the top-level initiative to make digital infrastructure available to youth work projects is **OPIN**. OPIN is an online tool which is used by the Youth Board of Cyprus in order to engage young people into a consultation. Currently, the tool is used for the development and follow – up of the National Youth Strategy.

So far, there are no trainings to equip both youth workers and young people with digital and media literacy skills to be used in youth work projects taking place in Cyprus. Also, there are no top-level initiatives aiming at facilitating cooperation and partnerships between youth work providers and actors in the fields of education, innovation, research and development, and business, in order to support the transmission of digital practices and technology to youth work.

10.5 Youth workers

Status in national legislation

Currently, there are no top-level policies, measures or guidelines regulating the status of youth workers in the country.

In 2017, the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) launched an **online consultation** phase for developing standards of vocational qualifications of the youth worker. This consultation phase together with the efforts for creating the mechanism of validation of non-formal and informal learning will result in developing standards of vocational qualifications of the youth worker and the validation of the competences of young people taking part in youth work activities.

Education, training and skills recognition

Currently, there are not any paths in formal education leading to a qualification as youth worker in Cyprus.

There is no training for continuous professional development, either directly organised or funded by public authorities, available to youth workers – volunteers and/or professionals – to reinforce and expand their competences. However, youth workers have the opportunity to continue their professional development by participating in Erasmus+ mobility of youth workers or Transnational Cooperation Activities organized by the Erasmus+ National Agency in the country.

At this moment, there is not any procedure for the validation of skills and competences gained by youth workers through non-formal and informal learning, but this is something to be developed soon through the mechanism of validation of non-formal and informal learning, as mentioned by the Minister of Education in the [2017 Conference on Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning](#).

Mobility of youth workers

The [Youth Initiatives Programme](#) of the Youth Board of Cyprus offers the possibility for youth workers to take part in exchange opportunities on international level. According to the programme, youth workers can get funding to participate in a training activity, seminar or conference abroad, in Europe as well as beyond. The funding covers the traveling and accommodation expenses. The main objective is the professional development of the youth workers.

10.6 Recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work

Existing arrangements

So far, there are not any existing arrangements when it comes to the recognition of the skills and competences acquired by young people participating in youth work activities.

Following EU Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports is co-ordinating the establishment of a validation mechanism on non-formal and informal learning in Cyprus.

In addition to that, young people who participate in youth work activities through the Erasmus+ programme, have the opportunity to use the Youthpass, a tool to document and recognise learning outcomes.

There are not any existing arrangements when it comes to the accreditation towards a qualification (full or partial) within the system of formal education for young people participating in youth work activities.

Skills

There are not any top-level national policies and/or recognition mechanisms that identify specific skills and competences that can be acquired through youth work. However, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, by bringing in the process of creating the mechanism of validation of non-formal and informal learning, will soon offer the opportunity to young people to recognize the competences gained through youth work activities.

10.7 Raising awareness about youth work

Information providers

The main sources of information available to young people to know about youth work and opportunities for engagement are:

Youth Information Centers:

The **Youth Information Centres** (YIC) operate along the standards of Youth Information Centres of Europe and the guidelines of the European Youth and Information Counseling Agency (ERYICA). The main purpose of the centres is to provide general information on a wide range of youth related issues in a comfortable, modern and friendly environment. A further YIC aim is to assist young people towards social inclusion as independent persons. YIC offer information and guidance on the Youth Board of Cyprus' programmes and services, information about workshops and other recreational, social and sports events and about European opportunities for young people.

Eurodesk: Eurodesk's main purpose is to provide information on European policies and opportunities that interest young people or youth workers, such as mobility, volunteering, exchanges, work, internships, non-formal learning and much more.

Key initiatives

The main top-level authorities' initiative to raise public awareness about the value of youth work is the «**Up to You(th)**»- **Annual Youth Festival**. The festival is organized by the Youth Board of Cyprus. In 2019, its fifth edition will take place. Young people themselves are the protagonists of the festival since they are one of the most vibrant and promising parts of the society. In particular, the Festival includes an NGO Fair with more than 70 youth non-governmental organizations (NGOs), active in the fields of volunteering, environment, social justice, culture, human rights and other. Through the NGO fair, youth organizations have the opportunity to disseminate their work and reach out to young people. The target group of the festival is general public.

10.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Currently, the Youth Board of Cyprus, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports and the Human Resource Development Authority are discussing the establishment of vocational qualifications of the youth worker.

In addition to that, it is expected that following the recommendations from the Council of Europe's experts, the Youth Board of Cyprus will develop a national road map for the holistic development of quality youth work, including recognition of youth work, validation mechanisms of competences and experience of practicing youth work and professionalisation of youth workers through the creation of educational paths.

Last, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports is coordinating the establishment of a validation mechanism on non-formal and informal learning in the fields of education, volunteerism and youth, which will soon come into place.

Ongoing debates

There are no ongoing debates taking place now.

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GLOSSARY

Youth: Youth are all people between 14-35 years old.

Youth Board of Cyprus: The Youth Board of Cyprus is the government's agency established to address youth issues. The Youth Board of Cyprus is a semi-governmental organisation under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. It was established as a Legal Entity of Public Law in 1994. According to the Youth Board Law, the administrative board of the Youth Board of Cyprus shall advise, through the Minister of Education and Culture, the Council of Ministers about the configuration of a comprehensive and specialized policy on youth matters.

Council of Ministers: The Council of Ministers is the executive branch of the Cypriot government, consisting of ministers. The council is chaired by the President of Cyprus and the ministers head executive departments of the government. The President and ministers administer the government and the various public services.

The Cyprus Problem: Cyprus was proclaimed an independent State, The Republic of Cyprus, on 16 August 1960, based on the Zurich-London Agreements between United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey, which were signed by the Greek -Cypriot and the Turkish - Cypriot Communities.

The 1960 constitution has provisions to ensure a balance of power between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. In 1963 the Turkish Cypriot members of the Parliament left their seats for ever, since conflicts arose.

On July 1974, claiming to act under article 4 of the Treaty of Guarantee, the Turkish armed forces staged a full scale invasion against Cyprus. Turkey proceeded to occupy the northern part of the island and empty it from its Greek inhabitants. By the end of the following year the majority of the Turkish Cypriots living in the areas left under the control of the Republic had also made their way to the part of Cyprus occupied by the Turkish army. The situation remains the same since then.

Gross Enrolment Ratio: the Gross Enrolment Ratio for a given level of education is derived by dividing the total number of pupils at this level regardless of age, by the population of the age group which according to national regulations should be enrolled at this level.

ARCHIVE

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