



Youth Wiki national description

Youth policies in Serbia

2019

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Serbia

Youth policy in Serbia

The institutional framework of national youth policy in the Republic of Serbia is composed of:

- the Government,
- the Ministry of Youth and Sport,
- line ministries and other government institutions,
- Youth Council with Local Youth Councils,
- Fund for Young Talents “Dositeja”,
- Local Youth Offices and
- civil society organisations (National Youth Council of Serbia - KOMS, National Association of Youth Work Practitioners- NAPOR, National Associations of Local Youth Offices).

The overall responsibility for coordination, development and improvement of youth policy falls under the Ministry of Youth and Sport established in 2007.

The foundations of national youth policy in Serbia are defined by three core documents: the National Youth Strategy, the National Action Plan, and the Law on Youth.

The [National Youth Strategy](#) (Nacionalna strategija za mlade) was adopted **for the period 2015-2025**. It represents a comprehensive document outlining the priority objectives aiming to contribute to an active and equal participation of young people in various areas of social life. It lays down the basic principles of action, directions and expected results of all youth policy actors' activities and defines 9 strategic goals.

The [Law on Youth](#) (Zakon o mladima), was adopted in 2011 and in line with the recommendations from the National Youth Strategy and its Action Plan. It is the binding official document that addresses youth/young people, Youth Policy actors, youth activity, youth work aiming to support young people in organisations, social activism, development and fulfilment of their potential for their own and for the benefit of the society.

Even though there are several definitions of “young people” within intersectoral legislation, the Law on Youth define young people as persons from **15 to and including 30 years of age**. According to the last consensus in 2011 Young people between ages of 15 and 29 make up about 18 percent of the total population in Serbia.

The most important national initiative that promotes youth activism and volunteerism is the programme Youth Rules ([Mladi su zakon](#)). This programme financially supports youth projects, but also promotes them and disseminates relevant information through its network of local authorities, local youth offices, youth organisations, organisations for youth, etc.

Serbia has a long tradition of volunteerism and the Law on Volunteering ([Zakon o volontiranju](#)) was adopted in 2010. The law among others specifies the principles of volunteering, volunteering contracts, the rights and obligations of volunteers and organisers of volunteering.

In recent years, youth employment and entrepreneurship have become a topic of public interest. As youth unemployment rate remains high, different top-level measures are active and annually revised to overcome youth unemployment and alleviate brain drain.

1. YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

In this chapter an overview on Youth Policy Governance in the Republic of Serbia is presented.

The Youth Policy is being implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sport responsible for youth affairs through the implementation of the [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) and other policy documents for the field of youth. The Ministry coordinates activities related to the implementation of these documents, together with different bodies in charge of special areas in youth sector and all other Youth Policy actors.

Youth Policy actors besides the Ministry, are:

- the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth,
- line ministries,
- local self-government units/local youth offices,
- National Youth Council of Serbia ([Krovna organizacija mladih Srbije](#)),
- institutions, youth and for youth associations carrying out youth activities,
- and other actors participating in the implementation of the Youth Policy.

Besides the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, other relevant documents/policies in place are:

- the Law on Youth (Zakon o mladima),
- the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy (Akcioni plan za sprovođenje Strategije za mlade),
- Youth Health Development Strategy (Strategija razvoja zdravlja mladih),
- the Labor Law (Zakon o radu), etc.

One of the first major milestones in supporting youth policy/youth policy governance was the establishment of the [Ministry of Youth and Sport](#) in 2007. Later on, youth policy was further defined in the [Law on Youth](#) (Zakon o mladima) which entered into force in 2012.

The Law on Youth regulates measures and activities undertaken by the Republic of Serbia, the autonomous province and local self-governments aimed at improving the social status and position of youth and at creating conditions for addressing young people's needs and interests in all the areas of interest for young people.

The purpose of the Law is also to create conditions for supporting young people in organisations, social activism, development and fulfilment of their potential for their own and for the benefit of the society.

1.1 Target population of youth policy

The Law on Youth (Zakon o mladima) defines **youth or young people** as persons from **15 to and including 30 years of age**. Therefore, the Youth Policy actors target their actions at this age group.

In addition, the Youth Health Development Strategy targets young people aged 10-26, and distinguishes 2 groups:

- children ages 10-15 and school children and
- students aged 16-26.

Furthermore, in official documents and statistics (e.g. labor force surveys) youth unemployment usually refers to those aged 15-24.

1.2 National youth law

Existence of a National Youth Law

The [Law on Youth](#) (Zakon o mladima) is the binding official document of the Republic of Serbia that addresses youth/young people, Youth Policy actors, youth activity, youth work aiming to support young people in organisations, social activism, development and fulfilment of their potential for their own and for the benefit of the society.

The Law was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on 05 July 2011 and entered into force on 17 January 2012.

Scope and contents

The Law on Youth was adopted in 2011. It regulates measures and activities undertaken by the Republic of Serbia, the autonomous province and local self-governments aimed at improving the social status and position of youth and at creating conditions for addressing young people's needs and interests by:

Defining the general aims of the Youth Policy in Serbia;

- Envisaging the development of National Youth Strategy;
- Identifying the youth and for youth associations as one of the key actors in Youth Policy development and implementation;
- Envisaging formation of the Youth Council, Youth Offices and Agency for Youth;
- Setting the framework for financing of programmes and projects in the youth sector;
- Specifying the role of institutions in monitoring of Youth Policy.

The Law regulates and supports following **principles** that set the foundation of the youth policy in Serbia:

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

The Law defines the **rights and obligations of young people** as well. It stipulates that all young people should be equal and entitled to equal opportunities and participation in all spheres of life. Additionally, the Law specifies that young people should actively contribute to the building and upholding of social values and to the development of their communities. Young people should express intergenerational solidarity and actively work on creating the conditions for an equal and full participation in all the aspects of social life of young people with disabilities, minority youth and all other persons and social groups that may be at risk from discrimination.

The Law targets the young population in general (aged between 15 and 30), and identifies youth with fewer opportunities. All young people are recognized as equals. It specifies that any unjustified difference made between or any unequal treatment of young people, direct or indirect, on any grounds is prohibited.

The Law specifies the following **regulating aspects of the National Youth Strategy**:

- active participation of young people in social life,
- ensuring equal opportunities rights,
- access to information,

- encouragement and validation of tolerance, democracy and exceptional achievements of young people,
- fostering and development of formal and non-formal education,
- encouragement and incentives for employment and self-employment of young people and youth entrepreneurship,
- improvement of youth safety, sustainable development and healthy environment,
- protection and improvement of youth health and other activities and areas of importance for young people.

As described on the official webpage of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the **drafting of the Law** was conducted in two phases of the consultative process, with the participation of relevant actors in youth policy, such as:

- youth representatives,
- youth offices,
- local self-government units,
- associations,
- relevant state institutions,
- ministries,
- Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (Stalna konferencija gradova i opština),c
- Committee on Youth and Sports of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia,
- the media,c
- the industry, etc.

In the first phase of the process, together with local youth offices, 45 round tables were held with about 1,500 young people from youth organizations and local institutions.

In the second phase of the consultative process, 29 round tables were held with more than 1,000 participants. Also, a public hearing on the draft of the Law was held in six cities. Young people participated in all stages of the drafting of this law. According to the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the majority of the solutions contained in the adopted law are the result of the demands of young people expressed in the consultative process.

Revisions/updates

The Law on Youth did not undergo any revisions/updates.

1.3 National youth strategy

Existence of a National Youth Strategy

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

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

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

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

Scope and contents

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

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

The principles of the Strategy are the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Target groups identified within the Strategy are young people in general, including vulnerable social groups of young people. Regarding vulnerable social groups, the Strategy

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

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

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

Responsible authority for the implementation of the youth strategy

[The Ministry of Youth and Sport](#) is the top-level authority responsible for the coordination, development and improvement of youth policy, the National Youth Strategy, as well as other national plans and programmes for youth.

The Government has the role in forming a working group responsible for Strategy implementation monitoring. The working group's tasks are to propose measures to harmonize the implementation of activities, monitor the implementation of the Strategy and take part in the evaluation and preparation of annual reports on the implementation of the Strategy. Throughout the process, the Ministry of Youth and Sport provides professional, administrative and technical support to the working group.

The Youth Council is involved in the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy as well. All ministries involved in the work of the Youth Council prepare reports on the results achieved in working with youth and in the implementation of the Strategy. [These reports](#) are adopted at the meetings of the Council and publicly available on Ministry's website.

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

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

To summarize, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Government Working Group for the implementation of the Strategy, and the Youth Council, are in charge of performing regular

annual evaluation. The line ministries are responsible of preparation of the report for the Government. As for progress reports on the implementation of the Strategy, the Ministry of Youth and Sport and Youth Council are those institutionally in charge. The annual Progress Report on the implementation of the Strategy is submitted to the Government. The Progress Report is public and available to the general public.

By the end of 2019, one two evidence-based evaluations of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy have been conducted.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

increase of youth participation, employment and entrepreneurship, youth work programmes, the number of young people involved in the work and activities of youth and for youth organisations, etc.).

Revisions/updates

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

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

1.4 Youth policy decision-making

Structure of decision-making

The institutional framework of national youth policy in Serbia is composed of the Government, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, line ministries and other government institutions, Youth Council with Local Youth Councils, Fund for Young Talents “Dositeja”, Local Youth Offices and civil society organisations (KOMS, NAPOR, National Associations of Local Youth Offices) as presented in the Figure 1 below.

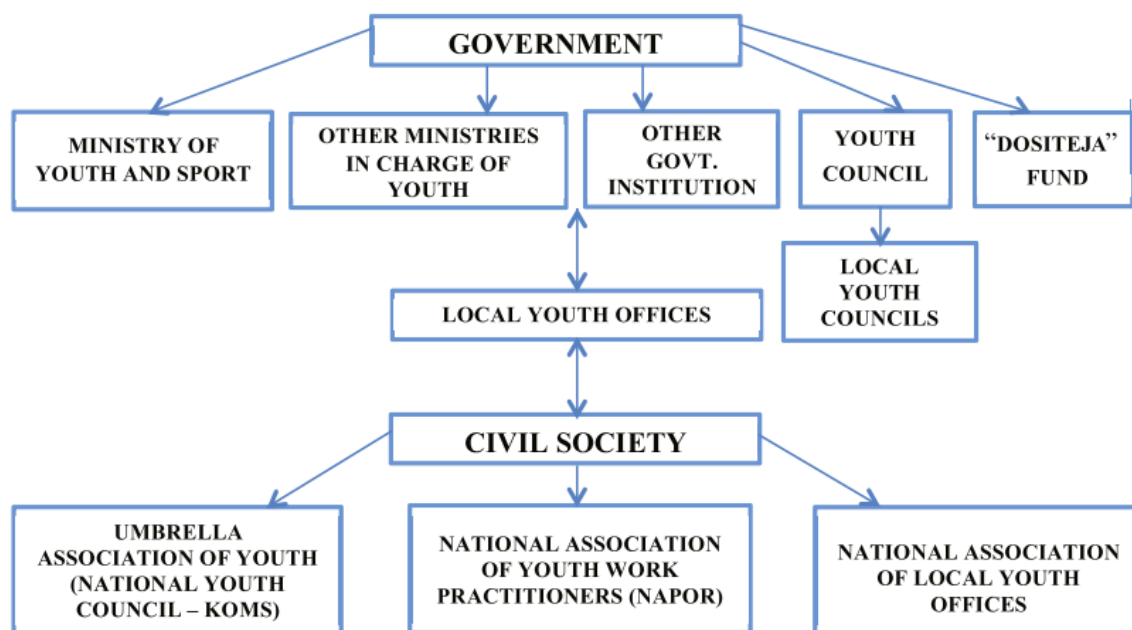


Figure 1: Institutional framework of national youth policy.

Source: [the Report of the Council of Europe on Youth Policy in Serbia](#), 2016.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia proposes a national youth strategy for adoption by the National Assembly. This is the main document that forms Youth Agenda (see [Glossary](#)). It outlines the priority objectives to which implementation should contribute to.

The Ministry of Youth and Sport is responsible for the coordination of youth policy, but the youth policy is implemented by all youth policy actors.

Besides the Ministry of Youth and Sport, other public authorities active in youth consultation processes are:

- Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development;
- Ministry of Health;

- Ministry of Labour, Employment, Social and Veteran Affairs;
- Ministry of Finances;
- Ministry of Culture and Information;
- Ministry of Interior;
- Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sports.

Institutional actors involved in the youth policy making

National institutional actors

[Youth Sector](#) within the Ministry of Youth and Sport has a that performs the tasks related to:

- The system, development and improvement of youth policy;
- The implementation of national policies and the preparation and implementation of a national youth strategy, action plans and programs;
- The work of the Fund for Young Talents;
- Encouraging young people to organize themselves and to join and participate in social activities;
- Protecting interests of young people and helping young people to realize these interests;
- Encouraging non-formal education of young people;
- Cooperation with youth organizations and associations in organizing international youth events and gatherings in the Republic of Serbia;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the place and role of young people in the Republic of Serbia;
- Creating conditions for the establishment and operation of youth offices;
- Encouraging the development of youth policy and the work of youth offices at the local level;
- Monitoring the implementation of youth policy at all levels of government.

[The Youth Council](#) (see [Glossary](#)) was established in January 2014 as the advisory body of the Government. The main task of the Council is to coordinate intersectoral coordination at the national level. It is responsible to stimulate and harmonize activities related to the development and implementation of youth policy. It proposes measures for its improvement and coordinating the activities of the line ministries and other bodies in charge of specific areas in the youth sector and all other youth policy actors.

Institutional actors at the level of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina of the Republic of Serbia

[Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth](#) of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (APV) performs following activities:

- Implementation and monitoring of the implementation of the Youth Policy Action Plan in APV;
- Implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan for the fight against drugs in APV;
- Implementation of the projects in the field of youth policy;
- Financing and co-financing projects for youth organisations and youth;
- Support to the establishment and operation of local youth offices;
- Support the development and implementation of Local Action Plans for Youth;

- Cooperation with local self-governments from the territory of AP Vojvodina and local youth organizations and youth;
- Support to the work of the [Vojvodina Youth Center](#) (See [Glossary](#))
- Active cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Provincial Secretariats in the field of youth policy;
- Research, monitoring and evaluation of programs.

Provincial Youth Council was established in 2012 on the initiative of the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth. Its main goal is to stimulate and coordinate activities related to the development and implementation of youth policy and to propose measures for their improvement at the level of APV. Provincial Youth Council is established and coordinated by the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth.

Local institutional actors

Youth offices

Youth office is a unit of the city/municipal government responsible for coordination of local youth policies in all areas relevant to young people, and in accordance with the specific needs of their local communities. It is a part of the local self-government and carries out tasks related to:

- planning, implementation and monitoring of the youth policy at the local level,
- initiating and monitoring the implementation of the Local Action Plan for Youth (see [Glossary](#)),
- establishing cooperation with all relevant partners,
- networking, communication and mutual coordination, as well as informing youth.

Local Youth Councils

In accordance with the Law on Youth, the Local Youth Council is an advisory body of the Municipal Assembly/City Assembly that encourages, coordinates and monitors activities related to the development and implementation of youth policy at the local level and proposes measures for its improvement.

The Local Youth Council has two important roles:

- It is a body that allows young people to participate actively in decision-making;
- It is a body for networking and cross-sectoral cooperation with various institutions involved in the field of youth (schools, Ministry of Interior, National Employment Service, Health Centers, etc.).

Civil Society Organisations

Civil society organisations have important role in youth policy development in Serbia.

[National Youth Council of Serbia - KOMS](#) is the highest representative body of the young population.

[National Association of Youth Work Practitioners - NAPOR](#) is a vocational association of youth organisations whose mission is to create and develop conditions for quality assurance and recognition of youth work with the aim of developing potential of youth and youth workers, who contribute to welfare of community and society.

[National Association of Local Youth Offices](#) mediates between local Youth Offices on one side and public authorities and civil society on the other.

Main Themes

According to the Law on Youth, the youth policy includes all measures and activities of government bodies, institutions, associations and other actors directed at the

improvement and promotion of the position and status of young people. Youth sector include the areas in which youth activities are performed, specified in the general goals of the National Youth Strategy.

The central document that provides guidelines and national objectives is the National Youth Strategy together with the Law on Youth (see Youth Wiki/Serbia [1.3 National Youth Strategy](#) and [1.2 Law on Youth](#)).

In preparation of the National Youth Strategy, and the priority areas of youth policy in Serbia, numerous studies and available research were used. Following documents served as a basis for the preparation of the Strategy:

- [Report on the implementation of the National Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2008 – 2014](#),
- [The Youth - Our Present](#),
- [Youth and Public Policy in Serbia](#),
- [A study on indicators of youth policy in the Republic of Serbia](#),
- [Analysis of the situation of young people in the strategies of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the recent sociological research](#),
- [Indicators for monitoring the population of young people in Serbia](#),
- [Research on Position and Needs of Youth in Serbia](#).

As a result of the overall preparatory activities, following **priority areas** have been identified in the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025:

1. Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship,
2. Education, Pedagogical Work with and Training of Youth,
3. Youth Activism and Active Participation,
4. Health and Well-Being of Young People,
5. Youth Safety,
6. Social Inclusion of Youth,
7. Youth Mobility,
8. Informing Youth,
9. Youth Culture and Creativity.

The youth policy in general targets the young population aged between 15 and 30 but it also includes vulnerable social groups of young people as well, especially young people from NEET group and young migrants. Furthermore, the priority area Youth Mobility one strategic goal is directly aiming to support young migrants. First planned step was to support projects aimed at collecting data about irregular youth migration. Next, identification of needs and priorities of young migrants is planned together with defining policies based on the obtained data. The main goal of these activities is to improve prevention and fight against irregular migration of young women and men and support young migrants.

Furthermore, the priority area Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship with its strategic goal **Improved employability and employment of young women and men** aims to improve the position and work opportunities of young people in NEET. More precisely, the Strategy aims to ensuring the improvement of existing and creation of new programmes that encourage the activity of young women as well as young people from vulnerable social groups and young people from NEET group.

The National Agency for Youth

National agency for youth does not exist in the Republic of Serbia, although the [Law on Youth](#) provides such an opportunity.

Policy monitoring and evaluation

The Ministry of Youth and Sport is in charge of monitoring and evaluation of policy results defined by the National Strategy for Youth 2015–2025. The monitoring of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy and its Action Plans is planned to be conducted at regular intervals (monthly, quarterly and annually), depending on the type of activity, and on the deadlines set for their implementation. Likewise, the evaluation should be conducted regularly, once a year, using different sources of information, on the basis of the indicators set in the Strategy and its Action Plan.

Evaluation of the previous Strategy for period 2009-2015 and evaluation of the Strategy 2015-2025 for the period 2015-2018 have been conducted. The summary of results of these evaluations can be found in [1.3 National Strategy for Youth/Responsible authority for the implementation of the youth](#).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Youth and Sport conducts numerous analysis on youth related subjects and published [20 research papers](#) in period 2009-2017 regarding youth policy, youth employment, health, activism, needs, problems, youth mobility, mental health, public opinion, etc.

1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

Mechanisms and actors

The Ministry of Youth and Sport is in charge of establishing a cross-sectoral cooperation to ensure a continuously structured dialogue between the youth, associations performing youth activities, young researchers, national, province and local-level authorities and other youth policy actors.

In accordance with the Law on Youth, Act 16 (see Youth Wiki/Serbia [1.2 Law on Youth](#)), the Government established the Youth Council in 2014 as the governmental advisory body responsible for cross-sectoral collaborative work.

The work of the Council is defined by the [Rules of Procedure](#). Council meetings should be held at least 2 times a year. The Council gathers members of different ministries, youth offices and national councils of national minorities, youth organizations, organizations for youth and their associations enabling cross-sectoral, horizontal, inter-ministerial and interdepartmental approach to youth policy-making across various policy-making fields, aiming at maximizing the potential of youth policy.

More precisely, members of the Council are representatives of: Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Ministry for Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government, Ministry of Culture and Information, Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth, common representative of the national councils of national minorities, expert in youth policy, Sombor Youth Office, Novi Pazar Youth Office, as well as the representatives of youth organizations, organizations for youth and their associations such as: "Građanske inicijative", "Centar za razvojnu politiku i saradnju", "NAPOR", "Lovefest", "Unija srednjoškolaca Srbije", "Resurs centar Bor", "Međunarodna organizacija studenata AISEC Srbije", "Savez izviđača Srbije".

Provincial Youth Council at the level of the Autonomous Province Vojvodina (APV), has the same role as aforementioned Council at national level.

Cross-sectoral approach is also achieved through development, implementation and monitoring of the National Youth Strategy and its Action Plans. This is defined in the Strategy Chapter 6: Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting mechanisms which specifies that line ministries and government organisations and institutions are in charge of achieving the planned results and overseeing the activities foreseen under the Strategy and its Action Plan. Also, at the request of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the autonomous province of Vojvodina and the local self-governments are obligated to submit at least one annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan to implement the Strategy in their respective territory. Nonetheless, in order for the monitoring to be successful, all other partners are planned to be involved as well - the line ministries, institutions and organisations and associations. In addition, the Strategy predicts a number of international organisations to be involved in the monitoring process.

Cross-sectorial cooperation is also established at the level of the Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia ([Fond za mlade talente Republike Srbije](#)), which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The Fund annually provides scholarships and rewards for over 3,300 students. The President of the Fund is the Minister of Youth and Sport, while members of the Fund are the Rector of the University of Belgrade, the president of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, as well as ministers of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Ministry of Finances and Ministry of Culture and Information.

1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

There is no uniform definition of evidence-based youth policy in Serbia. However, policy making takes into account the analysis of the wellbeing and living conditions of young people and the challenges that they experience.

According to the National Youth Strategy, the Ministry of Youth and Sport is responsible for establishing a single and comprehensive monitoring system. The Ministry, the Government Working Group for the Implementation of the Strategy, and the Youth Council, are in charge of performing regular annual evaluation. The line ministries are obligated to prepare the report for the Government. As for progress reports on the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, the Ministry and the Youth Council are those institutionally in charge.

In addition to the research of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, research in the field of youth is carried out by other institutions as well.

- [The Ministry of the Interior](#) (Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova),
- [the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia](#) (Republički zavod za statistiku),
- [the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit](#) (Tim za socijalno uključivanje i smanjenje siromaštva),

as well as the institutes:

- [Institute for Sociological Research](#) (Institut za sociološka istraživanja) and
- [Institute for Psychology](#) of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade (Institut za psihologiju Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu),
- [Institute of Public Health of Serbia "Dr. Milan Jovanovic Batut"](#) (Institut za javno zdravlje Srbije dr „Milan Jovanović Batut”),
- [Center for Politicological Research and Public Opinion](#) of the Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade (Centar za politikološka istraživanja i javno mnjenje Instituta društvenih nauka u Beogradu),
- [Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade](#) (Institut ekonomskih nauka u Beogradu),

- Institute for Development and Innovation (Institut za razvoj i inovacije)
- as well as various non-governmental organisations conduct research on youth position and needs, youth employment, youth policy, etc.

Most of the available research results do not address the persons aged 15 to 30 and youth category is addressed in a general way. The position of young people and its trends can be determined on the basis of individual reports from the Ministry of Youth and Sport, national and international institutions and organizations.

Therefore, the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 provides a specific objective to foster better understanding of the youth based on relevant data to enable good development planning and resources allocation in all areas of society and at all levels of government. To achieve this goal, it is envisaged to:

- establish a National Institute for Youth Research by 2025,
- support the formation of the National Network of Young Researchers, and
- ensure regular surveys on the needs of young people and on the topics of interest and to use the obtained results in the development of future plans.

The monitoring of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy and its Action Plans is planned to be conducted at regular intervals (monthly, quarterly and annually). The intervals depend on the type of activity and on the deadlines set for their implementation. Likewise, the evaluation should be conducted regularly, once a year. It should use different sources of information and be guided by the indicators set in the National Youth Strategy and its Action Plans.

In practice, the Ministry publishes research/studies in cooperation with different research actors using the indicators set in the Strategy. This data is taken into consideration on different levels of youth policy making. For instance, the goals and objectives of the National Youth Strategy and its Action Plans are widely based on evidence from this data and from other studies conducted by different researchers.

The development of the alternative data collection networks is also supported by the Strategy, as well as the creation of records and the locally established network of data sources.

Cooperation between policy-making and research

There are different ways in which cooperation between policy-making and research is established.

Besides the research conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Sport itself, the research conducted by higher education institutions, relevant research institutions (e.g. National Employment Service, Statistical Office, Institute of Public Health of Serbia, etc.), organisations and experts in the field serve as the ground for the development of the legal and other official state documents.

The following resources served as a basis for the preparation of the National Youth Strategy:

- [Report on the implementation of the National Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2008 – 2014,](#)
- [The Youth - Our Present,](#)
- [Youth and Public Policy in Serbia,](#)
- [A study on indicators of youth policy in the Republic of Serbia,](#)
- [Analysis of the situation of young people in the strategies of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the recent sociological research,](#)
- [Indicators for monitoring the population of young people in Serbia,](#)

- [Research on Position and Needs of Youth in Serbia.](#)

The Ministry of Youth and Sport also cooperates with international organisations and institutions on external evaluation. E.g. the Ministry in 2014 in cooperation with United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA) developed the evaluation report on the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2008-2014 and Action plan 2009 – 2014.

The Ministry, as a part of its regular activities, publishes on its website important [research reports](#) regarding the future of youth in Serbia, youth needs and situation, youth mobility, free time and non-formal education of youth, youth mental health, youth employability and entrepreneurship, etc.

National Statistics and available data sources

The most important actors collecting statistical data on youth is the Ministry of Youth and Sport, together with the [Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia](#) (Republički zavod za statistiku). The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia performs expert tasks related to adopting programs, organization and statistical surveys' conducting. So far, its tasks related to youth analyzes were a part of different surveys, such as:

- [labor force surveys](#),
- [census of population](#),
- [education](#), etc.

For these purposes, indicator NEET (young people Not in Employment, Education or Training) has been established precisely for the youth population by the Statistical Office.

The Ministry of Youth and Sport has been conducting regular annual [Survey on Position and Needs of Youth of the Republic of Serbia](#) (Pozicija i potrebe mladih u Republici Srbiji) since 2008 aiming to analyze the status, challenges, attitudes on social issues that young people share in Serbia. Specific focus is given to:

- education,
- employment,
- professional practices,
- security,
- health,
- mobility,
- culture,
- information,
- activism, etc.

It aims to externally evaluate the current situation in the areas of strategic interest for young people as defined in the National Youth Strategy. Therefore, it remains one of the basic starting points of the Ministry for the development and monitoring of the implementation of strategic documents in the field of youth policy, as well as for setting priorities in financing programs and projects of public interest in the youth sector.

The last Survey on Position and Needs of Youth in the Republic of Serbia was carried out in November 2016.

Other research reports regarding the future of youth in Serbia, on youth needs and situation, youth mobility, free time and non-formal education of youth, youth mental health, youth employability and entrepreneurship, etc. are published on the Ministry's website but are not conducted regularly.

Budgetary allocations supporting research in the youth field

The Government does not have a line of funding for research on the youth explicitly supporting evidence-based youth policy making apart from resources allocated to the Ministry of Youth and Sport for youth employability and social inclusion ([Law on Budget](#), Article 4).

Allocated budget for public procurements of the Ministry of Youth and Sport for Survey on Position and Needs of Youth for 2019 is RSD 1.1 million, and for monitoring of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for 2019 is RSD 1.3 million.

1.7 Founding youth policy

How Youth policy is funded

Youth Policy is mainly funded through:

- State budget (through public calls of line ministries)
- Budget of local self-governments (through local public calls)
- EU funds
- Other- membership fee, donations, provided services, etc.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia annually drafts a proposal of the Law on Budget for the next year. The National Assembly adopts the [Law on Budget](#), together with the budget lines allocated for the youth sector and for the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Two budget lines in the Law on Budget 2019, Article 4 are allocated for the youth sector:

- IPA 2014 – Youth Employability and Social Inclusion in the amount,
- IPA 2014 – Lifelong Learning.

These funds are allocated for the use of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Additionally, the budget line 481 is intended for appropriations for non-governmental associations.

What is funded?

The Ministry of Youth and Sport annually allocates government funding to the other governmental institutions, non-governmental organisations (youth organisations, organisations for youth and their associations), for municipal youth work, and other actors doing youth work. The Ministry uses the funds for activities addressing youth employability and social inclusion, Survey on Needs and Position of Youth, implementing and monitoring of the National Youth Strategy, etc.

Eligible organisations and activities for funding are defined in the [Rulebook on Financing and Co-financing Programmes and Projects of Public Interest in the Field of the Youth Sector](#) (Pravilnik o finansiranju i sufinansiranju programa i projekata od javnog značaja u oblastima omladinskog sektora). See more in the following section.

Financial accountability

The Rulebook on Financing and Co-financing specifies the method of approving programmes and projects of public interest in the field of the youth sector. It further specifies the manner of allocating funds for their implementation and the manner of reporting on the results that have been achieved by the implementation of the approved programme/project.

Articles 10, 13 and 14 of the Rulebook, define the financial accountability of recipients of public funding. Briefly:

- The beneficiaries are obligated to use the funds exclusively for the implementation of the approved programme/project;
- The signed contract regulates the mutual rights, obligations and responsibilities of the contracting parties (most importantly: the name of the approved programme/project; the time of its implementation; the amount of approved funds; the monitoring, evaluating and reporting activities);
- The beneficiaries are obligated to submit final narrative and financial report within 20 days after the end of the programme/project;
- The beneficiaries are obliged to allow the Ministry of Youth and Sport to monitor the implementation of the programme/project, to be present in the realization of the activities, as well as to have the insight into the overall programme/project documentation.

Use of EU funds

The Republic of Serbia, as a pre-accession country, is not eligible for the use of ESF, Development and Cohesion Fund, and other sources of funding available to the EU member states.

However, since the Republic of Serbia is a candidate for EU membership, it has a **limited access to EU funds**. The Republic of Serbia is currently the beneficiary of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance 2014-2020 (IPA II), from which approximately EUR 1.5 billion is earmarked for action programmes. About 36% of the funds are earmarked for reforms in the field of rule of law, democracy and public administration, 50% for socio-economic development and investment in human resources and 14% for agriculture and rural development. Serbia is also a beneficiary of the Multi-beneficiary IPA - an instrument that supports initiatives of regional importance for the Western Balkans. The funds earmarked for this regional instrument for the period 2014-2020 amount to almost EUR 3 billion. In addition, the Republic of Serbia participates in seven cross-border cooperation programs and two transnational cooperation programs. The EU provided EUR 260 million to cross-border co-operation in Serbia.

Each of these funds are available for youth-related issues/activities. In terms of that, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance 2014-2020 (IPA II) largely supports projects and initiatives aimed at improving youth education, employment and youth social inclusion. In addition, cross-border cooperation projects fund initiatives in various fields, innovative solutions, investment in human resources and the promotion of young people's mobility.

For example, two budget lines in the Law on Budget 2019, (Article 4) are allocated for the youth sector:

1. IPA 2014 – Youth Employability and Social Inclusion in the amount of RSD 12,87 million covered only by the state budget,
2. IPA 2014 – Lifelong Learning covered by the state budget in the amount of RSD 1,429 million and by EU funds in the amount of RSD 57,137 million These funds are allocated for the use of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Youth in Action – Serbia

In the period of 7 years (2007-2013), 316 projects with Serbian organisations as coordinators were implemented. The total amount of the approved projects was over EUR 5,6 million.

Erasmus+ programme – Serbia

By the end of 2018, Serbian organisations participated in 83 Key Action 2 Capacity building in the Field of Youth projects with a total value of over EUR 4,3 million.

By the end of 2017, Serbian organisations participated in 13 Key Action 1 Mobility Projects for Young People and Youth Workers were approved with a total value of EUR 175 401.

Trends in the amount or in the type of activities supported through EU funds

Evaluations of the youth-related initiatives/activities/programmes receiving EU funds do not exist and the trends in the amount or in the type of activities supported through EU funds are not being monitored.

1.8 Cross-border cooperation

In order to establish and promote international cooperation in the field of youth policy, the Ministry of Youth and Sport establishes contacts with the relevant institutions from different countries and usually also determines the signing of the agreement on cooperation in the field of youth and sports. That way the cooperation between the two countries is officially defined, which should stimulate conducting joint activities, as well as help to find funds from different available sources (e.g. EU funds) for the implementation of agreed projects.

The role of these agreements is to enable student exchange, encourage mobility of young people, as well as their participation in conferences and seminars, the implementation of joint projects, etc. The agreements also contribute to more intensive exchange of relevant information, materials and publications of importance, etc.

Cooperation with European countries

Number of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) on youth affairs have been signed with EU and EU-candidate countries. Some of them are:

- MoUs with Greece (2011),
- Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2011), the Slovak Republic (2012),
- Portugal (2012),
- Turkey (2013),
- the Joint Declaration on Cooperation with the Kingdom of the Netherlands (2009).

International cooperation

The Ministry of Youth and Sport collaborates with different international organisations, usually through the implementation of projects related to the youth and youth policy.

[Latest collaborative projects \(2015-2019\)](#), have been/are being implemented with:

- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit- **GIZ**,
- Swiss Development Cooperation - **SDC**,
- United Nations Development Programme - **UNDP**,
- United Nations Population Fund - **UNFPA**,
- United Nations Women- **UN Women**,
- United Nations Children's Fund - **UNICEF**,
- European Union - **EU**.

The Ministry and GIZ cooperate in the project "[Youth Employment Promotion](#)" that aims to support young people Serbia aged 15 to 35 years in order to improve their position on the labour market. The project supports organizations, hubs and centres that provide an incentive environment for young people to acquire entrepreneurial skills and start their own business.

Collaboration with SDC is through the programme "From Education to Employability (E2E) – Youth Skills Development and Public Private Partnership in Serbia" ("Od obrazovanja do zapošljavanja: razvoj veština mladih i privatno – javnih partnerstava u Republici Srbiji"). The programme represents a four-year partnership project of two governments –

Switzerland's and Serbian — designed to create preconditions for a faster recruitment and youth employment. The program aims to improve the youth job prospects in Serbian labor market by changing the policy framework and developing skills and knowledge of young people that employers are looking for.

UNDP and the Ministry are implementing the project "[Capacity Development for Improved Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements \(MEAs\)](#)" ("Jačanje kapaciteta za unapređeno sprovođenje međunarodnih sporazuma iz oblasti zaštite životne sredine"). The project aims to improve implementation of MEAs in Serbia by strengthening consultative processes and integrating MEA provisions into high-priority policies and programmes at national and municipal levels. Additionally, it will develop capacity in key target groups including youth and university and mid-career students.

UNFPA, UNDP, UN WOMEN and UNICEF worked on the project "[Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia](#)" aiming to change normative framework, institutional practices and behaviours pertaining to violence against women and girls at state, community and individual levels. The overall objective of the project is further development of social and institutional environment that will contribute to zero tolerance and eradication of violence against women in Serbia.

The Ministry and UNICEF in Serbia developed Work Plan for 2019-2020 ([Plan rada između Ministarstva omladine i sporta i UNICEF-a u Srbiji 2019-2020](#)). Objective of this cooperation is to establish an efficient system that will enable relevant, high quality and fair participation of young people. The aim is to involve adolescents and youth in consultation processes and to develop innovative solutions for young people affected by poverty and for young people from other vulnerable social groups.

IPA 2014 project "Innovative, integrated services tailored to young people focused on the development of entrepreneurial skills, and models and packages of active inclusion established and put into function through local partnerships" („Inovativne, integrisane usluge prilagođene mladima usmerene na razvoj preduzetničkih veština, i modeli i paketi aktivne inkluzije uspostavljeni i stavljeni u funkciju kroz lokalna partnerstva") is supported by European Union with national co-financing. The main institutional beneficiaries are the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Social and Veteran Affairs and the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Project implementation period is 2019-2021. Implementation of the project aims to increase the scope and quality of services in education and employment at the local level, innovative practices and models of active inclusion, thus strengthen the social inclusion of young people.

Memorandums of understanding (MoUs) on youth affairs have also been signed with different non-EU countries, such as:

- Republic of Srpska (2010),
- Ukraine (2011),
- Azerbaijan (2011), and
- Bosnia and Herzegovina (2012).

[Agreement on the Establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office](#) was signed on Western Balkan Summit held in Paris, on 4 July 2016, by 6 prime ministers from 6 Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia.

[Regional Youth Cooperation Office \(RYCO\)](#) is an independently functioning institutional mechanism, aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region through youth exchange programs.

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

1.9 Current debates and reforms

In 2018 the public hearing about the National Youth Strategy's Action Plan 2018-2020 was conducted, and later on it was adopted. In this period, the realization of youth activities related to several areas, such as employment and entrepreneurship, education, upbringing and training, activism and active participation, health and well-being, safety, social inclusion, mobility, information and culture and creativity of young people are planned. The Action Plan will be implemented at the national, provincial and local levels.

Total funds for its implementation amount to RSD 15,201 billion. More precisely, RSD 13 billion are provided from the state budget, while RSD 2,195 billion are provided from other sources - IPA funds, the private sector, associations that conduct youth activities and other national and international programs and donors.

Through the [Regional Youth Cooperation Office \(RYCO\)](#), Serbia aims to help reform financing of youth mobility by supporting different projects in the field of youth. In order to achieve that, RYCO so far has published two open calls. Under the last Call for Proposals, RYCO intended to support civil society organizations and secondary schools to implement activities in the areas of regional youth cooperation, mobility and exchange, and enabling environment for regional youth cooperation.

2. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

This chapter summarizes the situation of youth volunteering in the Republic of Serbia. Volunteering is regulated by the Law on Volunteering which defines volunteering as an organized and voluntary provision of services for the general interest and benefit, without any compensation or other material gain.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs is responsible for overall regulation, promotion and support of volunteering regardless of age, while the Ministry of Youth and Sport is involved in defining policies and measures on youth volunteering. Other actors mentioned later in this chapter participate in different levels of policy-making from counselling, preparing drafts and conducting studies, to implementing volunteering programmes and promoting volunteering at state level.

2.1 General context

Historical developments

Serbia's long tradition of volunteerism officially started in 1911 when the Scouting organisation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, predecessor of the Scouting Organisation of Serbia ([Savez izviđača Srbije](#)), was established. This organisation was one of the organisations that participated in the establishment of the [World Organisation of the Scout Movement](#) in 1922. The Scouting Organisation of Serbia has been the member of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement ever since.

After the World War II, the influence of anti-fascism and socialism ideologies became dominant in youth policy and youth treatment. The promoted values were equality, solidarity, friendship, freedom, atheism, volunteerism, patriotism and collectivism. Next phase of the youth activism was increased role of the so-called Youth Labour Actions (Omladinske radne akcije, ORA) and other forms of youth work that represented voluntary labour activities of young people. These voluntary labour activities were initiated and supported by the state and promoted as the complementary part of the education with the main aim to rebuild infrastructure damaged during the war. Youth labour actions were used to build public infrastructure such as railways, public buildings, roads, industrial infrastructure, while the participants were organized into "youth brigades".

Later on in 90s, volunteerism was further embraced through establishment of the [Young Researchers of Serbia](#) (Mladi istraživači Srbije) and its sector the Voluntary Service of Serbia (see Chapter 2/[2.5 Cross-mobility projects/Other programmes](#)).

The beginning of the 21st century was the turbulent time for Serbia, following the collapse of Yugoslavia and the process of economic transition. Nevertheless, some major milestones were achieved, such as the beginning of the first [national initiative for the legal regulation of the status of volunteers in Serbia "IZVoR"](#) which aim was to:

- promote the culture of volunteering,
- promote civil activism,
- initiate the legal regulation of the status of volunteers in Serbia,
- propose the draft of the Law on Volunteering.

The civil society organisations, by implementing voluntary activities, had advocated and influenced the establishment of the first Ministry of Youth and Sport in 2007 as the top-level authority responsible for youth and youth policy.

Since then, actions that promote better conditions for volunteering and a legal basis for voluntary work took place at state level, consequently leading to the adoption of the Law on Volunteering (2010) ([Zakon o volontiranju](#), 2010), the [Law on Youth](#) (2012), the

National Youth Strategy (2008-2014, 2015-2025) together with the Action Plans for its implementation.

Final push for the adoption of the Law on Volunteering was when Serbia was selected to be a host of the World Summer Universiade. The Universiade was held in Belgrade in 2009, with more than 11 000 young volunteers from all around the world.

Today there are numerous volunteering organisations with different aims and structures. One of the biggest organisations at the national level is the Scouting Organisation of Serbia with three thematically different but interconnected sectors – Youth Sector, Voluntary Service of Serbia and Environmental Protection and Conservation Sector.

Main concepts

The Law on Volunteering (Zakon o volontiranju) in force since December 2010, defines volunteering as an organized and voluntary provision of services for the general good and good of other persons, without any compensation or other material gain.

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 (Nacionalna strategija za mlade 2015-2025) similarly defines volunteering: "Volunteering is a non-profit activity by which individuals, independently or within a group or organisation, contribute to the welfare of their communities."

The Law recognizes **short-term** and **long-term volunteering** (at least 3 months without interruption and more than 10 hours a week). In the case of long-term volunteering, a **volunteering contract** is obligatory, and in case of short-term volunteering, a **volunteering certificate** is issued at the request of a volunteer.

The Law also specifies the principles of volunteering, volunteering contracts, the rights and obligations of volunteers and organisers of volunteering and supervision over the implementation of the Law itself.

The **6 principles of volunteering**, stipulated by the Law, represent the legal framework for:

- promotion of solidarity,
- prohibition of discrimination,
- protection of the users of volunteering,
- prohibition of abuse of volunteering,
- protection of youth, and
- volunteering free of charge.

The Law defines the following:

- The organizer of the volunteering is obliged to insure volunteers in the event of an injury at work and professional illness;
- Volunteering may not replace the work of employees, nor other forms of work engagement (vocational training for independent work in the profession, professional development, professional practice, etc.);
- Volunteering is not considered to be a work as a member of an association, trade union, political party, etc.
- In the case of a long-term volunteering, volunteers may be provided pocket money (up to 30% of the net amount of the minimum monthly salary in the Republic of Serbia);
- Companies and public companies may organize volunteering only with the previously obtained approval of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans' Affairs and Social Affairs.

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

The main governmental authority responsible for volunteering is the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs ([Ministarstvo za rad, zapošljavanje, boračka i socijalna prava](#)). The Ministry is responsible for volunteering regardless of age, not just for the youth volunteering.

Under the Law on Volunteering ([Zakon o volontiranju](#)), the Ministry is responsible for the overall supervision and approving the volunteering programmes as well as for keeping records of these programmes.

[Sector for Labour](#) and its Department for normative and analytical work in the field of labour, is in charge of all volunteering aspects defined in the said law. The Department performs tasks related to:

- voluntary work,
- preparation of decisions for recognitions of the volunteering programmes for public enterprises and companies,
- collecting and entering data on the organisers of the volunteering programmes in the national register (Evidence of Volunteering) and informing the organisers about it.

Important public actor involved in regulation of youth volunteering is also the Ministry of Youth and Sport ([Ministarstvo omladine i sporta](#)). The responsibilities of the Ministry of Youth and Sport related to youth volunteering are specified in the [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#).

To summarize, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs is responsible for overall regulation, promotion and support of volunteering regardless of age, while the Ministry of Youth and Sports is involved in defining policies and measures on youth volunteering.

- The National Youth Strategy envisions providing support in organisation and valuation of youth voluntary work, as well as providing adequate conditions for volunteering in all areas of social life. Aiming to promote activism and volunteerism, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has launched the programme [Young Researchers of Serbia](#) (Mladi istraživači Srbije) with its [Voluntary Service](#) (Volonterski servis) through which it cooperates with international and national partners of various profile (youth work, volunteerism and environmental protection from different fields). The Voluntary Service organizes [international voluntary workcamps](#) abroad and volunteering projects in Serbia.
- National Association of Youth Offices ([Nacionalna asocijacija kancelarija za mlade](#)) is a representative body of cities and municipalities that have youth offices (see Chapter 1/[1.4 Youth policy decision-making/Structure of decision-making](#)). It gathers 92 members and helps in networking, exchange of good practices in the field of youth, and it participates in Youth Council (see Chapter 1/[1.4 Youth policy decision-making/Structure of decision-making](#)).

The abovementioned actors participate in different levels of policy-making- from counselling, preparing drafts and conducting studies, to implementing volunteering programmes and promoting volunteering at state level.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

Aside from the cross-sectoral cooperation established at the level of the Youth Council determined by the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 (see Chapter 1/[1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries/ Mechanisms and actors](#)) that envisages cooperation of actors in the field of youth (ministries, secretariats, experts in youth policy, youth offices,

youth organisations, organisations for youth and their associations, etc.), the [Office for Cooperation with Civil Society](#) (Kancelarija za saradnju sa civilnim društvom) was established in 2011 by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The Office has been established as an institutional mechanism to support the development of a dialogue between the Serbian Government and civil society organisations. The Office conducts technical affairs, including:

- Cooperating with state bodies, municipalities, cities, as well as with associations and other civil society organisations,
- Conducting technical affairs related to cooperation and exchange of experiences with similar governmental institutions in the region, European Union member states and the world;
- Organizing round-table discussions and conferences;
- Issuing publications and undertaking other measures and activities aimed at upgrading the capacities and raising the sustainability of associations' and other civil society organisations' operation and actions;
- Collecting and disseminating information relevant to associations' and other civil society organisations' operation; etc.

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

Existence of a national strategy

There is no specific national strategy on youth volunteering in Serbia. However, the [National Youth Strategy](#) (see Chapter 1/1.3 [National Youth Strategy](#)) introduces youth volunteering activities and measures for improving conditions for volunteering of young people and for young people.

Scope and contents

The National Youth Strategy emphasizes the importance of volunteering: 'Volunteering is and should always be the basis of civil society and as such it should be encouraged in society, especially among youth.' The Strategy states that the noticed low interest of young people for volunteering is due to the unsatisfactory conditions for this kind of engagement. On the other hand, the Strategy finds important that the young people are skilled, especially in technical knowledge, which could be of great help in different volunteering activities.

The National Youth Strategy defined a specific challenge in the field of youth activism and active participation (National Youth Strategy, 4.3 Youth Activism and Active Participation): 'A non-conducive environment for volunteering, affected by poor institutional framework, the lack of strategy and plan of implementation of the Law on Volunteering and support to voluntary actions.'

In terms of that, the National Youth Strategy's specific goal is to improve conditions for volunteering of young people and for young people, while the main actor for that should be the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The expected results and planned activities for tackling the challenge defined in the Strategy are:

1. Conducive environment and support for the development of voluntary activities and youth volunteering provided by:

- Supporting voluntary activities of youth activity associations, youth offices and informal youth groups;
- Supporting involvement of young volunteers in short-term and long-term volunteer programmes;

- Encouraging educational, cultural and sports institutions to recognise, support and value youth volunteering;
- Establishing a system for the identification and recognition of skills acquired through volunteering for the purpose of employment and monitor its effectiveness;
- Encouraging intergenerational cooperation and inclusion of vulnerable young people through volunteer programmes, projects and initiatives;
- Supporting programmes for volunteering in case of emergency.

2. Youth volunteering is recognised and its development is supported by:

- Supporting the formulation of volunteering policy at the national level, improvement of legal framework for volunteering and development of volunteer work standards;
- Including volunteering programmes into national and local development plans, and emergency response plans;
- Supporting youth [policy actors](#) in gaining understanding of legal obligations and enhancing the protection of volunteers and beneficiaries of volunteering;
- Supporting the networking of volunteer centres and services within youth activity associations and youth offices;
- Developing gender-sensitive criteria for reporting and measuring the effects of volunteering;
- Supporting the programmes that promote volunteering as socially useful activity.

3. Empowered youth activity associations and youth offices to implement volunteering programmes and projects by:

- Ensuring the application of volunteer work standards in the activities of youth activity associations and youth offices;
- Supporting volunteer management training for youth activity associations and youth offices;
- Supporting the development and work of volunteer services within youth activity associations and youth offices;
- Supporting the regular gender-sensitive evaluation of volunteer programmes within youth activity associations and youth offices.

Responsible authority

The top-level government authority responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the National Youth Strategy is the Ministry of Youth and Sports. For more information about its responsibilities, implementation and monitoring of the National Youth Strategy and its Action Plans, see Chapter 1/[1.3 National Youth Strategy/Responsible authority](#)).

Revisions/updates

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 has not undergone any revisions/updates since its adoption, as already said in Chapter 1/[1.3 National Youth Strategy/Revisions/updates](#).

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

National programme for youth volunteering

Programme Youth Rules ([Mladi su zakon](#)) is a national youth volunteering programme established in 2010 by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It aims to encourage young people to join, actively participate and conduct small initiatives that can change and improve their quality of life in the local context. Through these activities young people can organize

spaces for leisure time in local communities, conduct environmental campaigns and activities, actions aimed at fostering humanity and solidarity, tolerance, security, intergenerational cooperation and entrepreneurship of young people.

Two main types of activity are supported and implemented within the programme:

- youth voluntary projects and
- international voluntary workcamps.

Each year, more than 40 organizations and 1.500 young people across the country are involved in the programme in more than 60 local municipalities. It is coordinated by Young Researchers of Serbia – Volunteer Service of Serbia and selected Resource Centres (see [Glossary](#)) across the country.

Since 2010, more than 1500 youth ad-hoc volunteer projects have been financed and implemented by associations of young people and informal youth groups, which have arranged premises for young people in local communities, environmental actions undertaken, actions aimed at fostering humanity and solidarity, understanding and tolerance, security, intergenerational cooperation and entrepreneurship of young people.

Youth volunteering projects actively involved young people in social flows, enabling them to contribute to the community and the environment. These projects showed that young people recognise issues in their communities, that they want to be involved and help in resolving them.

International voluntary workcamps mostly deal with a specific need or a local community problem in a more sustainable or systematic way. Workcamps are mechanism through which international and national mobility of young people is encouraged. From 2014 a total of 162 international volunteer camps were organized in which participated more than 1200 volunteers from 25 countries and more than 1300 young people from Serbia.

Symbolically, each year on International Volunteers Day, 5 December, the programme Youth Rules celebrates accomplishments made in the previous year.

Funding

In 2018 the amount of funding dedicated to the national programme was EUR 171.155.

143 youth volunteering projects ([omladinski volonterski projekti](#)) and 35 international volunteering camps ([međunarodni volonterski kampovi](#)) were financially supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sport, and by experts from 11 Resource Centres and Young Researchers of Serbia. Youth volunteering groups from Serbia through renovated spaces for youth in their local communities and implemented actions aimed at encouraging solidarity, understanding, tolerance, safety, intergenerational cooperation, unselfish contribution to the development of the community and environmental protection, as well as encouraging entrepreneurial spirit among young people.

In 2019 of funding dedicated to the national programme was more than EUR 186.000.

Characteristics of youth volunteering

Official statistics on the level of annual participation of young people in volunteering in the Republic of Serbia is not available. The Ministry of Youth and Sport conducts annual [Survey on Position and Needs of Youth in the Republic of Serbia](#) (Položaj i potrebe mladih u Republici Srbiji) covering some questions regarding youth volunteering (see Chapter 1/[1.6 Evidence-based youth policy/National Statistics and available data sources](#)).

The Ministry of Youth and Sport conducted the Survey on Youth Activism and Awareness in the Republic of Serbia 2016 ([Aktivizam i informisanost mladih u Republici Srbiji](#)), declaring that 24% of interviewed youth participated in some form of voluntary activities in 2016. Compared to the previous years, this number differs from 31% in 2014 to 22% in 2015.

According to the Survey on Youth Activism and Awareness 2016, the activities took place in:

- charity work (35,6%),
- social responsibility and contribution to the community (26,8%),
- acquiring new skills and knowledge (18,2%).

Additionally, 10,1% of young people said that they volunteered because they had had free time, while 7,6% of young people volunteered in order to get recommendations for future jobs.

Organisations in which young people so far had the opportunity to volunteer are mostly charity (27%), civil society (25%), institutions such as health centres, youth, cultural and similar centres (18.5%), sports organisations (12.7%), youth offices (11.8%).

Support to young volunteers

The support to volunteers is specified in the Law on Volunteering. Volunteers are not allowed a financial compensation or other material benefits from volunteering. But the organisation or institutions engaging volunteers need to provide them with the following benefits which are not considered to be financial compensation mentioned above:

- working clothes and means and equipment for personal protection of volunteers;
- travel, accommodation, food and other expenses arising from the volunteering services and activities;
- medical examinations needed for volunteering;
- preparatory trainings for conducting volunteering services and activities;
- insurance premiums paid in the event of an injury or professional illness during volunteering, or financial compensation for insurance for damage incurred in the organizer of volunteering or a third party;
- payment of pocket money, in case of long-term volunteering (see Chapter 2/[2.1 General context/Main concepts](#)). The amount of pocket money may not exceed 30% of the net amount of the minimum monthly full-time salary in the Republic of Serbia. The payment of the pocket money is determined by the contract on volunteering.

Quality assurance

The main mechanism for monitoring and ensuring the quality of youth volunteering programmes, projects and schemes is the monitoring of the number of young people participating in volunteering projects and programmes, as well as the existence of national evidence of volunteering programmes/projects and their organisers.

The Law on Volunteering defines responsibilities of both the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and the organisers of volunteering programmes/projects. The Ministry is responsible for keeping the records of volunteering organisers and prescribing the application contents for the organisers of volunteering. The volunteering organiser is obliged to register any voluntary activity that is to be conducted for the first time.

The Ministry of Youth and Sport is involved in youth voluntary activities monitoring as well. It conducts surveys and research on youth activism, awareness, needs and position, together with the research on the implementation of National Youth Strategy Action Plans. So far, one [evidence-based monitoring evaluation](#) of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy Action Plan has been conducted for years 2015-2017 (see Chapter 1/[1.3 National Youth Strategy/Responsible authority for the implementation of the youth strategy](#)).

These surveys and reports are not targeted only/directly to the youth volunteering activities, but they cover relevant questions for monitoring and measures development.

The main outcome so far of [conducted reports and surveys](#) is the Action Plan 2018-2020 of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 which was developed according to the results and recommendations provided in mentioned documents.

Additionally, the Law on Volunteering specifies that the volunteering organiser is obligated to provide the volunteers with a written confirmation of their voluntary work, upon their request. This confirmation consists of:

- a volunteer personal information,
- volunteering organiser information,
- a brief description of volunteering services and activities,
- period of volunteering and
- information on preparatory trainings for conducting volunteering services and activities.

Target groups

Initiatives in the field of youth volunteering at national level do not identify specific target groups within the youth population.

2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes

EU programmes

There are several EU programmes in which Serbia participates, and numerous programmes in which young individuals participate on their own.

This section will provide information about EU programmes relevant at the national level.

- **Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, KA1 - European Voluntary Service**

From 2017 until 2018, Serbia was eligible to participate in the [Erasmus+ programme Key Action 1 – Learning Mobility of Individuals/European Voluntary Service](#).

In 2017 Call for Proposals, organisations from Serbia for the first time had the chance to apply as coordinators for the KA1 in the framework of preparatory measures for full participation of Serbia in the Erasmus+ Programme. In that call, one European Volunteering Service (EVS) was approved, and 3 EVS mobilities occurred.

As of 2019, Serbia is an Erasmus + programme country and, like all other countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme, it has access to the European Solidarity Corps initiative. However, the participation of Serbia within the ESC remains somewhat limited and is focused on joining partnership of volunteering projects.

- **European Solidarity Corps**

The current status of Serbia in the ESC opens the following opportunities for organisations and young people from Serbia:

- organisations from Serbia can be partners in volunteering projects and can send young people to short-term and long-term volunteering activities, as well as accommodate young people from ESC participating countries in short-term and long-term volunteering activities;
- organisations from Serbia can apply for and receive a Quality Label (if they meet the quality requirements) which is a prerequisite for participation in the ESC;
- young people from the ESC participating countries can volunteer in Serbia.

The number of young people from Serbia, according to the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, who went to some form of training, work or volunteering outside Serbia by 2011

was around 1% in all three categories. However, regular national reporting and monitoring of youth participation in the EU voluntary programmes has not yet been established.

Other programmes

Serbia does not have international volunteering programmes that are funded (at least for 50%) by the state and implemented on a large scale.

However, the [International Voluntary Workcamp programme](#) has been implemented by the non-governmental organization Young Researchers of Serbia (see [2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering Governance/Governance](#)). Its constituent part, [Voluntary Service of Serbia](#) (Volonterski servis Srbije, VSS) as a volunteer exchange service centre was founded in 1990 as one of the sectors of Young Researchers of Serbia. Today, it is an important factor in youth international volunteering programme. VSS coordinates the International Voluntary Workcamp programme aiming to help young people from Serbia to participate in the volunteering camps organized worldwide.

The International Voluntary Workcamp represents a special form of international voluntary service. It is a means of informal education that encourages the development of local communities, intercultural understanding and dialogue, active and democratic participation and youth mobility, social inclusion, gender equality, solidarity, freedom and peace. Camps have been organized worldwide since 1920 by more than 90 volunteer services connected through different international networks.

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

The Law on Volunteering ([Zakon o volontiranju](#)) allows foreigners to be volunteers in Serbia. Article 16 specifies that a long-term volunteering contract concluded with a foreigner is considered to be the proof that justifies his/her temporary residence in the Republic of Serbia, in line with the [Law on Foreigners](#) (Zakon o strancima).

2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

Information providers

The Ministry of Youth and Sports is the top-level public authority responsible for disseminating information on volunteering opportunities for young people.

The Sector for Youth of the Ministry is responsible for advising and preparing youth for employment and voluntary work, especially through youth voluntarism encouragement. The Sector for Youth provides following services related to youth volunteering:

- Raising awareness of youth about importance of volunteering;
- Informing youth about open applications for voluntary work;
- Social empowerment of youth by encouraging volunteerism and capacity building of youth organisations.

Additionally, the Ministry through the national programme Youth Rules ([Mladi su zakon](#)) developed an online platform www.mladisuzakon.rs with a special section dedicated to volunteering camps and local youth volunteering projects (see Chapter 2/[2.5 Cross-mobility projects/Other programmes](#)).

Key initiatives

The most important national initiative that promotes youth activism and volunteerism is the programme Youth Rules (Mladi su zakon). This programme financially supports youth projects, but also promotes them and disseminates relevant information through its network of local authorities, local youth offices, youth organisations, organisations for youth, etc.

The goal of the Ministry of Youth and Sport with this programme is to promote volunteerism and support young people in building a better life in their communities. Thanks to the 9-year-long implementation of the Youth Rules programme, the programme today is recognizable and visible to youth all around Serbia.

Aside from the Youth Rules activities, the Ministry of Youth and Sport annually organises 2 promotional and dissemination events/celebrations:

- [International Volunteer Day](#) on 5 December and
- [International Youth Day](#) on 12 August.

These events gather relevant public authorities in the youth and volunteering sectors as well as important stakeholders such as: civil society organisations, youth and for youth organisations, students, students' body representatives, media, organisers of volunteering, etc.

2.7 Skills recognition

Policy framework

Serbia does not have a unique top-level policy that enables the transferability and recognition of skills and competences acquired through volunteering. However, the Law on Volunteering specifies that the organiser of volunteering is obligated to provide the volunteers with a written confirmation of their voluntary work, upon their request. This confirmation consists of

- a volunteer's personal information,
- volunteering organiser's information,
- a brief description of volunteering services and activities,
- period of volunteering and
- information on preparatory trainings for conducting volunteering services and activities.

Additionally, the National Employment Service of Serbia included the questions regarding volunteering in two documents that unemployed persons provide to the Service in order to be registered. Mentioned documents are:

- Registration Form ([Obrazac za prijavljivanje na evidenciju](#)) and
- Information on Professional Experience ([Informacije o profesionalnom iskustvu](#)).

There is a common view at the state level that these aspects of the voluntary work should be further elaborated and formally supported from the state authorities. Step in that direction was already taken in January 2019 by making the youth work a profession, i.e. by including the **youth worker as a profession** in the new Classification Register ([Šifarnik zanimanja](#)).

Although there is no top-level responsible authority for validation and recognition of skills gained through volunteering, currently, the mechanisms for recognition of competencies acquired informally are being discussed and defined.

Existing arrangements

The arrangements and mechanisms for skills recognition at the state level are yet to be developed.

Some higher-education institutions (HEI) do validate the knowledge, skills and competences acquired in voluntary work through diploma supplement, or, rarely, through ECTS points, but this depends only on the decision of HEI's itself.

2.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 predicts some changes in the sector of youth volunteering policy and the Law on Volunteering, by claiming that its practical implementation has not shown desired effects on the promotion and stimulation of volunteering culture. The Strategy states that it is essential to include other laws, in addition to the Law on Volunteering, such as the Law on Associations, the Law on Higher Education, the Law on the Fundamentals of Education System, but also some sectoral laws (culture, social policy, youth, etc.) in order to establish an effective legal framework for volunteering in Serbia.

Ongoing debates

Thanks to the inclusion of the youth worker profession in the Classification Register (see [Chapter 2/Policy framework](#)), and activism of numerous civil society and youth and for youth organisations, debates regarding **key mechanisms for recognition of skills** gained through informal channels are taking place.

At the same time, civil society organisations are tackling different issues on volunteering and initiating changes in the volunteering infrastructure of Serbia. In that terms, the Young Researchers of Serbia - Volunteering Service of Serbia currently implements the project "National Programme of Youth Volunteering" ([Nacionalni program volontiranja mladih MLADI SU ZAKON](#)) financed by the Youth Rules programme of the Ministry of Youth and Sport aiming to contribute to the development of a favourable environment for youth volunteering through coordination of partnerships within the Youth Rules programme and the organisation of numerous volunteering camps in Serbia.

3. EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In Serbia, the employment may be established with a person at least 15 years of age. If a person is under the age of 18, the employment may be established with the written consent of the parent, adoptive parent or guardian, provided that such work does not endanger his or her health, morals and education, or if such work is not prohibited by law.

In recent years, especially from 2016, youth employment and entrepreneurship have become a topic of public interest. As youth unemployment rate remains high, different top-level measures are active and annually revised to overcome youth unemployment and alleviate brain drain.

The year of 2016 was the Year of Entrepreneurship in Serbia ([Godina preduzetništva](#)), which turned into the Decade of Entrepreneurship ([Decenija preduzetništva](#)). In 2017, entrepreneurs had more than 30 programmes available and more than RSD 18 billion from the state budget. Different promotional activities, workshops, competitions took place in that period and raised awareness about youth entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Different public authorities are responsible for youth employment and entrepreneurship in Serbia:

- Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs ([Ministarstvo za rad, zapošljavanje, boračka i socijalna prava](#))
- Ministry of Youth and Sports ([Ministarstvo omladine i sporta](#)),
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development ([Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja](#))
- [Ministry of Economy](#) (Ministarstvo privrede)
- National Employment Service ([Nacionalna služba za zapošljavanje](#))
- Development Fund of the Republic of Serbia ([Fond za razvoj Republike Srbije](#))
- Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry ([Privredna komora Srbije](#))
- [Development Agency of Serbia](#) (Razvojna agencija Srbije), etc.

3.1 General context

Labour market situation in the country

According to the data provided by the [National Bank of Serbia](#) (Narodna banka Srbije) in the document [Macroeconomic Developments of Serbia](#), the unemployment rate declined both in quartal 4 of 2018 and for the whole year. According to the annual labour force surveys, unemployment rates for the period 2008-2019 are as follows:

Serbia	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Unemployment rate in %	13.6	16.1	19.2	23.0	23.9	22.1	19.2	17.7	15.3	13.5	12.9	10.3

Source: [Macroeconomic Developments of Serbia](#)

According to the Labour Force Survey, 2018 of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (Republički zavod za statistiku), the unemployment rate in quartal 4 of 2018 was 12.9%

When it comes to young people, rates of activity, employment, unemployment and inactivity in 2017 and 2018 were:

Young population aged 15-24	2018 (%)	2017 (%)	Changes in relation to the previous year (%)
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Rate of unemployment	29,7	31,9	-2,2
Rate of employment	21,1	20,9	0,2
Rate of inactivity	70,0	69,4	0,6
Rate of activity	30,0	30,6	-0,6

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2018

Main concepts

The current employment policy is defined by the Employment Act, 2014 ([Zakon o radu](#), 2014).

Additionally, there are several strategies and accompanying action plans and programmes that are related to the youth employment and entrepreneurship. Most important are:

- The [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) - aims to encourage job creation, self-employment, and entrepreneurship among young people by implementing its Action Plans.
- The [National Employment Strategy 2011-2020](#) - aims to improve job matching services and training and provided subsidies to disadvantaged people and self-employment. It focuses on mediation in employment, provision of guidance and counselling service on career planning, providing subsidies for the employment of unemployed persons in the category of young people under 30 years of age, support to self-employment, further education and training, providing incentives for hiring of unemployment benefit recipients.
- The [Strategy on Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia 2016-2020](#) with the goals to strengthen the link between science, industry and society to encourage innovation, to engage young researchers in scientific projects, etc.
- The [Strategy for Education Development in Serbia 2020](#) with one of the priorities to introduce youth entrepreneurship in education and training programmes, etc.

Detailed review of abovementioned documents can be found in the study "[Analysis of the Regulatory Framework for Entrepreneurs Focusing on the Three Most Potential Sectors, Proposing Simplified Procedures for Young Entrepreneurs](#)" of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

3.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Three ministries are the main actors involved in policy-making in the field of youth entrepreneurship and employment:

1. Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs ([Ministarstvo za rad, zapošljavanje, boračka i socijalna prava](#))
2. Ministry of Youth and Sports ([Ministarstvo omladine i sporta](#)),
3. Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development ([Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja](#))

Department for Active Employment Policy ([Odsek za aktivnu politiku zapošljavanja](#)), within the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, conducts tasks related to the analysis of the labour markets trends and preparation of strategic documents (National Employment Strategy, National Employment Action Plans). The department is also responsible for the development of measures for active employment.

Youth Sector ([Sektor za omladinu](#)), within the Ministry of Youth and Sport, is responsible for the support and promotion of youth employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship. The support and promotion are mostly done through youth work

activities and informal education. The Ministry opens regular annual calls for financing projects related to the youth employability and entrepreneurship.

Department for dual and entrepreneurial education ([Sektor za dualno i preduzetničko obrazovanje](#)), within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, is involved in preparation and supervision of legal regulations in the field of entrepreneurial, dual, financial and IT education, as well as career guidance and counselling.

The main public actors involved in policy-making in the field of youth entrepreneurship and employment are:

1. Development Fund of the Republic of Serbia ([Fond za razvoj Republike Srbije](#)),
2. [Development Agency of Serbia](#) (Razvojna agencija Srbije),
3. Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry ([Privredna komora Srbije](#)),
4. National Employment Service ([Nacionalna služba za zapošljavanje](#)).

Development Fund is responsible for financing projects that encourage:

- businesses and entrepreneurs in the Republic of Serbia,
- employment,
- production,
- sustainable and comprehensive development.

The main activity of the **Development Agency** is to support micro, small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs. The Agency informs entrepreneurs about different support programs.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the national association of Serbian businesses that represents the interests of its members to the state authorities and institutions. Among different promotional and support activities directed to the businesses, the Chamber actively supports and encourages youth entrepreneurship through its project “Caravan of Youth Entrepreneurship” ([Karavan omladinskog preduzetništva](#)). This project supported the establishment of youth companies, as well as the empowerment and promotion of youth entrepreneurship in the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

National Employment Service supports young entrepreneurs through different support programmes, trainings, mentoring, especially through the Subsidy for Self-Employment Programme ([Subvencija samozapošljavanju](#)).

Cross-sectoral cooperation

Cross-sectoral cooperation occurs at the governmental level. The mechanisms of cross-sectoral cooperation vary according to the concrete needs and planned activities.

Ministry of Youth and Sports and Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, are implementing the IPA project “[Youth Employability and Active Inclusion](#)”. The project aims to increase employability and self-employability of youth by developing the sustainable solutions that address the needs of youth.

In addition, the Ministry of Youth and Sports established collaboration with different international organisations such as United Nations, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, German organisation for international collaboration – GIZ, Swiss Cooperation Office. The fields of collaboration are: improvement of the conditions for youth employment and employability, youth entrepreneurship, empowering youth offices, developing local action plans, informing young people about environmental protection, regional integration and youth mobility.

3.3 Skills forecasting

Forecasting system(s)

Skills forecasting is done at the level of companies or different public/private bodies without top-level mechanism for which government authorities would be responsible.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs is responsible for monitoring the status of and trends in the labour market in the country and abroad. The Ministry and the National Employment Service undertake the regular national-scale survey that focuses on the identification of the skills needed by Serbia's economy. This sample-based survey was carried out for the first time by the National Employment Service alone in 2016.

Skills development

According to the study [Institutional cooperation and coordination in Skills Development in Serbia](#), the country aims to use EU's Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance funds and, to develop a new mechanism for sector skills needs assessment, as part of the work of the future sector skills council (See [Glossary](#)) by 2020.

3.4 Career guidance and counselling

Career guidance and counselling services

As defined in the [Strategy for Career Guidance and Counselling in the Republic of Serbia](#) the objective of the career guidance and counselling services is to provide to each individual:

- personal development in order to be able to understand themselves and influence their own decisions and initiatives in the field of education and professional development;
- to explore opportunities for learning and employment, or for work;
- to plan and manage changes in the area of his / her learning and work, or to manage his / her career.

Three ministries are responsible authorities for the career guidance and counselling in Serbia:

- the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development ([Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja](#))
- the Ministry of Youth and Sports ([Ministarstvo omladine i sporta](#)),
- the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy ([Ministarstvo za rad, zapošljavanje, boračka i socijalna prava](#)).

Besides the ministries, important role in career guidance has also the National Employment Service ([Nacionalna služba za zapošljavanje](#)). The National Employment Service plans and coordinates the work of 34 offices in Serbia. Additionally, 13 Centres for information and professional guidance (CIPS) have been established in major cities. Furthermore, counsellors working in the National Employment Service also provide services related to professional orientation to school-aged children.

Relevant strategies

[Strategy for Career Guidance and Counselling in the Republic of Serbia](#) (Strategija karijernog vođenja i savetovanja) was adopted in 2010 with Action Plan for the period 2011-2014. New Action Plan has not been adopted yet. The Strategy defines the role of ministries, service providers and stakeholders.

[National Youth Strategy \(2015-2025\)](#) (Nacionalna strategija za mlade) includes one specific aim which relates to the development of a functioning and sustainable system of career guidance and counselling.

The [Strategy for Education Development](#) (2012) (Strategija za razvoj obrazovanja), recognizes that career guidance in education should be improved, and states that until 2020 a system of career guidance and counselling should be developed and implemented at all educational levels, including adult education. This Strategy was followed by a set of changes of educational laws in 2013 that specified the role of career guidance in education.

The National Employment Strategy (2011-2020) ([Nacionalna strategija zapošljavanja](#)) recognizes the importance of career guidance, especially in relation to reducing the mismatch between the skills supply and demand in the labour market. It is complemented by annual Action plans which define the aims and priorities of the employment policies.

Besides the above listed strategies, following policies regulate career guidance and counselling in three sectors:

1. Educational policies

The Law on the Foundation of Education System (2013) (Zakon o osnovama Sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja) (and the following amendment in 2017) introduced a provision that special attention should be given to career guidance and education of teachers, students and adults.

To implement career guidance programme in schools changes in different educational laws were introduced:

- the Law on Primary Education (2013) ([Zakon o osnovnom obrazovanju i vaspitanju](#)),
- the Law on Secondary Education (2013) ([Zakon o srednjem obrazovanju i vaspitanju](#)),
- and the Law on Adult Education (2013) ([Zakon o obrazovanju odraslih](#)).

The latest Law on dual education (2017) ([Zakon o dualnom obrazovanju](#)) also recognizes the importance of career management skills and student employability, as well as the role of schools' teams in career guidance of students.

2. Employment policies

The Labour Law (2017) ([Zakon o radu](#)) prescribes the rights to education, professional training and development, giving career guidance an important role in its implementation.

The Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment (2017) ([Zakon o zapošljavanju i osiguranju za slučaj nezaposlenosti](#)) specifies the role and the activities of professional orientation and counselling in choosing profession through employment policy, measures of active employment policy, as well as concrete services provided to clients.

3. Youth policies

[The Law on Youth](#) (2011) (Zakon o mladima) emphasizes the importance of career guidance for young people and defines aims and activities.

Career guidance and counselling services are provided by different institutions in three sectors:

1. **primary school level** - focused on professional orientation and making choices regarding the secondary school
2. **secondary school level** – organized school teams for guidance and developing annual plans. The career guidance and counselling are being implemented by psychologists and pedagogues, within the educational and pedagogic services organized in secondary schools by subject teachers. Their activities include a broad spectrum of activities that include counselling, providing information and guidance. The programme and the activities of the pedagogic-psychological service fall within

the competence of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

3. **higher education level** – university career centres provide career information and organize educational activities related to career management such as workshops, lectures and training courses to university students.

As the principal users of career guidance and counselling services, the Strategy of Career Guidance and Counselling recognizes:

- students,
- the unemployed,
- employees
- and employers.

It also pays special attention to the members of vulnerable groups, the young ones as well as those older than 45. In the field of employment (in employment services and agencies), the job seekers are the service users, while the end users of career guidance and counselling service are the employers themselves.

Besides the career centres formed in formal educational institutions and in National Employment Agency, there are also career centres or services within institutions and organizations that provide non-formal education, career centres within youth offices, different types of services for career guidance and counselling of adults - employed and unemployed, etc.

Regardless the area in which a career centre is established (education or employment), its work is planned to be founded on common standards. The Standards for Career Guidance and Counselling Services ([Pravilnik o standardima usluga karijernog vođenja i savetovanja](#)), adopted in June 2019, aims to establish an efficient and sustainable career guidance and counselling system.

Funding

Funds for financing the activities of the Strategy of Career Guidance and Counselling were secured through the [Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy 2010-2014](#) for the ministries and organizations involved in the implementation of this strategy.

No data about further funding in recent years is available. However, as the career guidance centres are now part of the institutions, they maintain their functioning.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance system was officially established in June 2019 by adoption of Standards for Career Guidance and Counselling Services ([Pravilnik o standardima usluga karijernog vođenja i savetovanja](#)) which defines quality standards in 4 areas:

- Career Management Skills,
- Guidance Practitioners Competencies,
- Organisational Standards,
- Standards of Career Guidance Programs.

These Standards are aiming to provide guidelines to providers of services in all sectors for improvement of the quality of guidance services.

3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

Traineeships and apprenticeships are regulated differently in Serbia.

The Law on Secondary Education ([Zakon o srednjem obrazovanju i vaspitanju](#)) defines apprenticeships as professional practice and refers to the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills for independent work in the professional field while still at school.

Apprenticeships are mandatory parts of the learning process in three-year and four-year secondary vocational schools, as well as in some higher education institutions (for e.g. in the field of healthcare, law, social work, etc.). The implementation of the apprenticeships and all contractual and other logistic activities are left on the responsibility of the institutions themselves.

On the other hand, Article 201 of the Employment act ([Zakon o radu](#)) states:

"Contract on vocational training may be concluded, for completing traineeship or taking a professional exam, when the law or a bylaw provides it as a separate requirement for independent work in the profession. Contract on internship may be concluded, for professional development and acquisition of specific knowledge and skills to work in the profession, or to undergo specialization, during the time established for the program of internship, i.e. specialization, in accordance with a special regulation".

Relation between students and businesses is not regulated by state regulations, but most commonly, contract is made between businesses and faculties.

Additionally, quality control mechanisms of traineeships and apprenticeships exist in some form only if they are parts of study programmes or educational profile (nurse, midwives, caterers, etc.).

Bylaw on the curriculum for VET schools (Pravilnici o nastavnom planu i programu) and Bylaw on implementation of apprenticeship for HEIs (Pravilnik o stručnim praksama) regulate the **conditions of the apprenticeships**. These bylaws define that students are obligated to document their daily activities in diaries that are signed by responsible persons in businesses where apprenticeship occurs. Later on, the diaries are being validated by teachers from VET schools/mentors from HEIs.

The social security coverage applying to participants to traineeships and apprenticeships, such as sickness insurance, social contribution, are not covered either by the state or by the sending institution.

Students do not receive any payment for their apprenticeship but should be covered by social security in case of work injury, i.e. it is expected that the school/HEI covers students' accident insurance.

Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

One of the specific objectives defined in the study "[Analysis of the Regulatory Framework for Entrepreneurs Focusing on the Three Most Potential Sectors, Proposing Simplified Procedures for Young Entrepreneurs](#)" is to improve the position of young people in the labor market through the improvement of internship programmes and professional practical traineeship.

Raising awareness about traineeships and apprenticeships, supporting and encouraging providers of traineeships and apprenticeships is promoted by individual organisations, public institutions and projects, without defined top-level policy measures/initiatives.

Recognition of learning outcomes

Qualifications acquired through apprenticeships during formal education are recognized at the level of formal education **through ECTS in higher education institutions (HEI)**. This is usually done as a part of one obligatory course at HEIs.

On the other hand, since 2019 when Serbia became Programme Country in Erasmus+ Programme, it became possible to use **ECVET system** for validation of activities conducted in mobilities in VET organisations. Yet, the ECVET system did not enter into official use in Serbia.

Young people participating in Youth Exchanges and Youth Worker Mobilities in the Erasmus+ programme use **Youthpass**. Youthpass serves as a recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning in youth work. Participants of Youth in Action and Youth in Action programmes use the Youthpass to describe what they have done and show what they have learnt. Youthpass ensures recognition of competences gained through non-formal learning in projects of the Erasmus+ programme: Youth in Action. Therefore, Youthpass can be observed as both a certificate of attendance and a certificate of a learning process.

Additionally, National Qualifications Framework (NQF) serves as the system for regulation of qualifications. The Law on National Qualifications Framework ([Zakon o nacionalnom okviru kvalifikacija](#)) defines the purpose of NQF, its objectives and principles, types and levels of qualifications, methods of qualifications' acquiring, descriptions of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes for qualifications levels. It also identifies bodies and organisations in charge of application and development of the NQFS, quality assurance in NQF application and references to the European Qualifications Framework.

Since January 2019, **youth worker has been officially registered as an occupation** in the [National Qualifications Framework](#) of the Republic of Serbia.

Funding

Main public body supporting apprenticeships and traineeships is the National Employment Service which implements the Programme for Professional Practice/Apprenticeships. In National Action Plan for Employment 2019 ([Nacionalni akcioni plan zapošljavanja 2019](#)) the proposal for co-financing of the Programme for Professional Practice/Apprenticeships was adopted, and the amount of financial support to unemployed people in apprenticeships was increased, and the amounts are as follows:

- 14.000,00 RSD for persons with secondary level of education,
- 16.000,00 RSD for persons with college degrees,
- 18.000,00 RSD for persons with completed at least four years of higher education.

Quality assurance

There is no top-level system of quality assurance applied to schemes of traineeships and apprenticeships in Serbia.

3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market

Youth employment measures

The [Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) (Strategija za mlade) recognizes that there is insufficient amount of appropriate programmes that foster youth employability and employment. It also points out low level of motivation among youth for applying to these programmes. Thus, a strategic goal has been established - to improve employability and employment of young women and men by developing services and mechanisms that foster employability and employment of young people through cross-sector cooperation.

According to the Evaluation of Implementation of Action Plan for Youth Strategy 2015-2016 ([Evaluacija Akcionog plana Strategije za mlade 2015-2017](#)) the overall number of unemployed young people decreased from 42,3% in 2011 to 28,5% in 2016. Yet this percentage again increased in 2018 to 29,7%, according to the [Labour Force Survey](#), 2018 of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.

The **responsible body for implementation of employment measures** in Serbia is [National Employment Service](#). It implements active employment policy which represents a system of plans, programs and measures aimed at increasing employment and reducing unemployment. The Service also implements measures through the projects that are implemented in cooperation with domestic and international organisations and institutions.

Employment measures are regulated by the Bylaw for Implementation of Employment Measures ([Pravilnik o kriterijumima, načinu i drugim pitanjima od značaja za sprovođenje mera aktivne politike zapošljavanja](#)).

Defined employment measures are:

- mediation in the employment of persons seeking employment;
- professional orientation and career guidance;
- employment subsidies;
- support for self-employment;
- additional education and training;
- incentives for users of financial compensation;
- measures of active employment policy for persons with disabilities
- other measures aiming at employment or maintenance of employment.

Persons seeking employment and employers are identified as target groups.

Measures addressing specifically/only young people are mainly related to the [subsidies to employers](#) from private sector that hire young people to the age of 30 that are:

- without any qualifications,
- with law qualifications,
- job seeking longer than 12 months,
- or were having a status of child without parental care.

Amount of the subsidy depends on the level of development of the unit of local municipality and the abovementioned categories of young people seeking employment. The amount varies between RSD 150.000 – 300.000.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

Flexicurity measures are focusing on employed people in general, rather than on youth exclusively.

Some important flexicurity measures defined in Employment Act ([Zakon o radu](#)) are:

- possibility for remote working and working from home,
- an employee under 18 years of age and an employed person with a disability are entitled to special protection,
- the employer has the right to transfer by a decree the employee to other appropriate jobs, without the offered annex to the contract, if necessary to perform a particular job without delay,
- an employee may be transferred to another place of work under certain circumstances defined in this law,
- an employee may be assigned to work for another employer, if temporarily there is no more need for his work, if business premises are leased, or a business cooperation contract has been signed - until the reasons exist for his assigning, and for a period not exceeding one year, etc.

Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

The main tool for reconciliation of private and working life in Serbia is parental leave which is regulated by the Employment Act. An employed woman is entitled to a leave of absence due to pregnancy and childbirth, as well as to a leave of absence for nursing a child, in the total length of 365 days. The father of the child also had the right on a leave for nursing

a child. In the course of maternity leave and leave of absence for nursing a child, the employed woman, i.e. father of the child is entitled to compensation of salary.

Additionally, Law on Financial Support for Families with Children ([Zakon o finansijskoj podršci porodici sa decom](#)) regulates financial support mechanisms for families with children.

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

Financing of the employment measures come either from the national budget or through different projects financed by EU, NGOs, embassies and private sector.

The main public body responsible for financing and implementing the employment measures is the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs. The Ministry's budget for support of youth employability and active inclusion in 2019 is RSD 21 million from the state budget and additional RSD 135,9 million from different sources, which makes the overall budget of **RSD 156,9 million** (see [Information Bulletin](#)).

Ministry of Youth and Sports also has a dedicated budget for 2019 for support programmes and projects for youth employability in total of **RSD 85 million** (see [Information Bulletin](#)).

Additionally, numerous projects aiming to support youth employability in Serbia are currently being active and supported by different institutions and organisations, i.e.:

- [Education to Employability – E2E](#) (Znanjem do posla) which has a total budget of **EUR 13 million**. The Swiss Government contributed with EUR 5.8 million, while Serbian Government contributed with additional EUR 6 million.
- [A new project of the European Union in Serbia](#), aiming to support youth activism and employability has a total budget of **EUR 4,7 million**. The project will be implemented in more than 35 cities and municipalities throughout the country in 2019-2020. Grants will be awarded to organizations at national and local levels to enable youth employability.

Quality assurance

The main mechanisms that foster youth employability and employment are to be achieved through the implementation of [Youth Strategy 2015-2025. Action Plan](#) for its implementation includes indicators that are measured in order to evaluate the success of the activities that:

- improve the existing active youth employment measures with special focus on the youth employment package,
- ensure the development of standards and models for the inclusion of representatives of corporate and youth sectors in local employment councils as permanent members of councils with voting rights,
- support the improvement of public policies that allow representatives of corporate and youth sectors to be engaged in the development of services (sectoral councils, business representatives participating in the work of local youth councils, representatives of youth participate in the work of local employment councils) and mechanisms that foster youth employability and employment.

Indicators that are being measured are:

- Number of young people encompassed by active measures and programmes (at least 30,000);
- Number of young people having found employment after the application of measures and programmes (at least 10,000);
- Number of services developed and implemented at the local level (30);
- Number of young people who are beneficiaries of the services (at least 3,000);

- Number of young people having completed training for jobseekers financed by Ministry of Youth and Sports (300);
- Percentage of youth becoming employed or self-employed after the training (60%).

Additionally, at the state level, the [Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia](#) conducts annual surveys on employability including youth employability and activism (see [Chapter 3/Labour market situation in the country](#)).

The main outcomes of quality assurance mechanisms have an effect on the Action Plans for the next period of Youth Strategy implementation, as well as on the annual changes of the employability measures taking place in the country, i.e. Action Plans and employability measures may be redefined.

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

Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

Two programmes for cross-border mobility that are being most active in Serbia are:

1. [Erasmus+ programme – Key Action 1 Learning Mobility of Individuals](#)
2. [EU Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#)

Erasmus+ programme – Key Action 1 Learning Mobility of Individuals is a part of the programme that supports mobilities for students, trainees, apprentices and young people, through their vocational schools, higher education institutions and youth organisations. In terms of mobilities fostering employment, entrepreneurship and vocational opportunities, individuals participate in different parts of KA1. Young people participate in:

1. Learning mobilities for higher education institutions, where students have the chance to go to Program and/or Partner Countries for traineeships in HEIs or companies;
2. Short/long term mobility in VET providers and/or companies abroad;
3. Youth exchanges where topics can address youth employability.

The support to individuals wanting to participate in Erasmus+ Programme is provided by the National Agency – [Foundation Tempus](#) (Fondacija Tempus) in terms of guidance and advice before, during and after mobilities.

EU Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a programme for entrepreneurs mobilities aiming to support their knowledge and practical skills gain. Individuals from Serbia are supported by local points in terms of guidance, help with application and establishing communication with suitable foreign entrepreneurs. Local points in Serbia are Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Creative Hub, Business Incubator Novi Sad, Business Development Center Kragujevac.

Legal framework

There is no specific legal framework for cross-border mobility of young workers, trainees/apprentices and professionals/entrepreneurs in Serbia. The [Law on Foreigners](#) (Zakon o strancima) applies also to all incoming young workers, trainees/apprentices and professionals/entrepreneurs.

3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

Policy framework

The entrepreneurship is recognized as a cross-curricular competence for all levels of education in Serbia.

Important policy documents in for entrepreneurship in Serbia are the [Strategy for the Support to Development of SMEs, Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness 2015-2020 and the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy](#) (Strategija za podršku MSP, preduzetništva i konkurentnosti za period 2015-2020 i Akcioni plan za njeno sprovođenje). The implementation of this strategy is based on annual Action Plans that are prepared in collaboration with state institutions and through the dialogue with private sector. The latest Action Plan is for the period 2018-2019, adopted in February 2018.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Economy recognized the development of private entrepreneurship as one of the country's priorities. In March 2015 the Government adopted the Strategy and defined, through the main priorities and concrete measures, the policy development of this sector in the next period.

Financial and non-financial support to this sector in 2016 was consolidated into the Year of Entrepreneurship ([Godina preduzetništva](#)), which turned into the Decade of Entrepreneurship ([Decenija preduzetništva](#)). The Government and the Ministry of Economy provide systematic support, financial and non-financial to SMEs and entrepreneurs. This account for 99.8% of the Serbian economy and employ 67% of people.

Through this programme in 2017, entrepreneurs had more than 30 programmes available and more than RSD 18 billion from the state budget.

Target groups defined in the Strategy are SMEs and entrepreneurs in general, but special emphasis was given to youth, women and social entrepreneurship, as well as to re-turners to hometowns, entrepreneurship in creative industries and IT sector.

Formal learning

In Serbia, the entrepreneurship competence is incorporated into curricula in terms of subjects and activities outside the classroom which may include visits to businesses.

Entrepreneurship is recognized as an important **cross-curricular competence** and learning outcomes are defined for all ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education, see [Glossary](#)) levels in primary and secondary education. Numerous ISCED 3 schools implement teaching and learning arrangements that promote entrepreneurship as a key competence. Entrepreneurial spirit is fostered through identification of chances, initiatives, creativity, innovation and risk taking by the students. In some schools model of student companies is operational. Moreover, the subject Entrepreneurship is compulsory in the significant number of VET schools. Direct cooperation is achieved between schools, local communities and local businesses (see [Eurydice Report](#)).

The **subject Entrepreneurship** was developed and introduced in 50 experimental schools from five fields of work in the first phase of the Secondary Vocational Reform Programme (2003-2005):

- agriculture and food processing,
- health and social protection,
- construction and geodesy,
- mechanical engineering and
- electrical engineering.

The subject curriculum was tailored to match each of the educational profiles involved. This subject aims to develop entrepreneurial and business knowledge, skills, behaviours, values and entrepreneurial way of thinking (see study [Entrepreneurship Education](#)

– [Preduzetničko obrazovanje](#)). It also covers the knowledge and skills necessary for professional development, job-hunting and self-employment (including the development of a simple business plan). The subject has a multidisciplinary approach and focuses on practical work.

Also, continuing professional development (CPD) courses have been developed with the support of South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECLE), co-funded by the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

In Serbia, central authorities provide an official list of approved textbooks for the curricula, including entrepreneurship education, thus attributing a certain quality label to the selected teaching materials.

Various institutions and partner organizations in Serbia are involved in entrepreneurial learning and an assessment of the effects and impact of introducing various concepts of entrepreneurial learning.

Non-formal and informal learning

In 2016 learning about entrepreneurship through different courses, programmes, projects financed by the state and/or different public institutions were organized and encouraged through the Year of Entrepreneurship ([Godina preduzetništva](#)) and the Decade of Entrepreneurship ([Decenija preduzetništva](#)).

One of the awareness-raising and entrepreneurship support projects that took place in 2016-2017 was the Caravan of Youth Entrepreneurship ([Karavan omladinskog preduzetništva](#)) implemented by the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This was the support programme for the establishment of youth companies, as well as for the empowerment and promotion of youth entrepreneurship in the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development maintains the portal Entrepreneurship (www.preduzetnistvo.gov.rs) aiming to be efficient service for the economy and to contribute to the affirmation and development of the entrepreneurial spirit in Serbia. On this portal following can be found:

- support programs for SMEs and entrepreneurs,
- support in the form of free advisory services,
- other initiatives, measures and projects that the SME sector can find useful,
- good practice examples.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry maintains the portal Youth Entrepreneurship (www.omladinskopreduzetnistvo.pks.rs) aiming to provide important information about financial and administrative aspects of starting a business. On this portal also can be found a list of support programmes for beginners in business ([programi podrške za početnike u poslovanju](#)).

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

The support for educators and youth workers in the field of entrepreneurship is offered mainly through projects and professional development courses for teachers

3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs

Access to information

Young entrepreneurs are informed through different channels, by following institutions and useful platforms, such as:

- [website of the Ministry of Economy](#) where open calls are regularly published by the Ministry,

- [platform of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce](#) and Industry dedicated to Youth Entrepreneurship which covers all main support programmes funded by the state, private sector and some EU programmes (Horizon2020 and COSME),
- sections on websites of the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#), [National Employment Service](#), [Regional Development Agency](#), [Innovation Fund](#) with information about their open calls.

Specific, tailor-made business trainings are conducted by the National Employment Service to all individuals that receive support through Service's programme of subsidy for self-employment ([Subvencija za samozapošljavanje](#)).

Additionally, as a part of different projects aiming to support youth employability and entrepreneurship (see Chapter 3/[3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence/Non-formal and informal learning](#)) different courses, workshops and competitions are organized in order to enable young people to engage and start their own business.

Access to capital

Financial recourses available to young people are ensured by:

1. The Ministry of Economy through following programmes:
 - Financial Support for Beginners in Business ([Programi finansijske podrške početnicima u poslovanju](#));
 - Support for Small Enterprises for Equipment Purchase ([Podrška malim preduzećima za nabavku opreme](#));
 - European Enterprise Promotion Awards ([Konkurs Evropske komisije za najbolju ideju u oblasti preduzetništva](#));
2. The Development Agency of Serbia through programme for Support for Internationalization of SMEs through Participation at International Fairs ([Program podrške internacionalizaciji MSP kroz individualno učešće na međunarodnim sajmovima](#));
3. The Development Fund of Serbia through Start-up loans ([Startup krediti](#)) and different types of other loans and guarantees;
4. Guarantee Fund of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina through Loans for Women Entrepreneurs, Owners of Small Businesses and Youth Aged up to 35 ([Kreditni za preduzetnice, vlasnice malih preduzeća i mlade do 35 godina starosti](#));
5. The National Employment Service through Programme of Subsidy for Self-Employment ([Subvencija za samozapošljavanje](#));
6. The Innovation Fund through:
 - Early Development Programme ([Program ranog razvoja](#))
 - Co-financing Innovation Programme ([Program sufinansiranja inovacija](#))
 - Innovation Vouchers ([Inovacioni vaučeri](#))
 - Technology Transfer Programme ([Program transfera tehnologije](#))

3.10 Promotion of entrepreneurship culture

Special events and activities

The [Strategy for the Support to Development of SMEs, Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness 2015-2020](#) defines the measures to promote the development of micro, small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurship through development and promotion of entrepreneurial spirit, and encouragement of entrepreneurship of women, youth and social entrepreneurship.

Additionally, the Ministry of Youth and Sports is responsible for the implementation of promotional activities aiming to raise awareness of the young, potential entrepreneurs about the opportunities and benefits of business incubators, as well as to conduct promotional campaigns to support the development of entrepreneurial spirit and entrepreneurship of young people.

The study "[Analysis of the Regulatory Framework for Entrepreneurs Focusing on the Three Most Potential Sectors, Proposing Simplified Procedures for Young Entrepreneurs](#)" proposes measures for the development of youth entrepreneurship in order to develop an entrepreneurial culture and climate. It finds it necessary to:

- develop entrepreneurial culture and raise the profile of entrepreneurship in general,
- develop social awareness on the contribution of entrepreneurs to overall economic,
- support development and promotion of entrepreneurs as the key creators of new jobs,
- actively involve the media in promoting entrepreneurship through series of educational shows, promotion of entrepreneurship success stories, covering various trade fairs, competitions, events where entrepreneurs meet.

It also proposes that it is necessary at the national level to clearly and transparently promote national programs to encourage entrepreneurship, especially youth programs.

Two Youth Entrepreneurship Fairs (*Sajam omladinskog preduzetništva*) occurred in 2017 and 2018. They were organized by Youth Business Forum and, [2017 Fair](#) was financially supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Economy and USAID Competitive Economy Project, while the [2018 Fair](#) was supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in collaboration with the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. At these fairs, young enterprises, successful entrepreneurs, hubs, institutions and NGOs important for the development of the entrepreneurial climate in Serbia were represented. This allowed young and future entrepreneurs to establish contacts with relevant stakeholders as well as to collect relevant, up-to-date information.

Networks and partnerships

The biggest entrepreneurship network active in Serbia is Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) Serbia ([Evropska mreža preduzetništva, Srbija](#)) in which members are:

- Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Development Agency of Serbia
- Innovation Centre of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering
- Business Incubator Novi Sad
- University of Nis
- Mihajlo Pupin Institute.

EEN Serbia does not target young entrepreneurs specifically, but enables them to learn about entrepreneurship, establish contacts and network by participating in its activities.

However, Innovation Fund together with the Embassy of Finland in the Republic of Serbia organizes local Slush competition for innovative companies. The winner of local competition enters the Slush Global Helsinki BootCamp Programme and gets a ticket for the Slush conference in Finland (the most visible event that promotes entrepreneurial culture in Finland).

3.11 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

The Standards for Career Guidance and Counselling Services ([Predlog standarda usluga karijernog vođenja i savetovanja](#)) was developed in 2017. The working group was led by the Institute for the Development of Education. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development officially enact the standards in June 2019. The adoption of the Standards provides the basis for the planning, development and evaluation of career guidance and counselling services provided by organisations in the field of education, employment, social protection and youth policy for individuals of different ages.

The Strategy for Career Guidance and Counselling in the Republic of Serbia ([Strategija karijernog vođenja i savetovanja](#)), was adopted in 2010 with Action Plan for the period 2011-2014. It is expected that the Action Plan for the next period should be developed in the near future.

Ongoing debates

One of the biggest challenges in Serbia is the **high unemployment rate of young people**. Bearing that in mind, the priority of the decision-makers is creating conditions for increasing youth employability and self-employability through cross-sectoral cooperation with all relevant youth policy actors. In this regard, particular attention was given to development of mechanisms and measures that would increase youth employment, especially in terms of reconciliation of labour market needs and education. Therefore, the adoption of the Law on Dual Education ([Zakon o dualnom obrazovanju](#)) in 2017 is considered essential since it provides the conditions for acquiring, improving and developing competences in accordance with the needs of the labour market.

From the 2019/2020 school year, **the model of dual education** has been applied in secondary vocational schools through theoretical education and practical work at the employer. The Law stipulates that a student is entitled to a monthly income for learning through work at a net amount of at least 70% of the minimum cost of work. The acquired competences are tested at the final exam. The fulfilment of the conditions for conducting dual education at the employer will be checked by the Serbian Chamber of Commerce.

Similarly, in September 2019, a Law on Dual Studies in HE ([Zakon o dualnom modelu studija u visokom obrazovanju](#)) was adopted, which introduces the possibility of organizing in parallel studying and work (an average of 450 hours of studying at a higher education institution i.e. attending lectures and exercises, and an average of 450 hours of work per year of studying during the whole study programme). The law envisaged that a student is paid at least 50% of a basic salary during the period of studying and work.

Additionally, Serbia participates in the **EU Youth Dialogue** where young people, youth organisations, policy and decision makers, experts, researchers and other relevant civil society actors, discuss and consult on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the field of youth. This 7th EU dialogue cycle was dedicated to the improvement of youth employment and education.

In order to improve the legal framework for quality assurance for traineeships, the Belgrade Open School (Beogradska otvorena škola), with the support of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of Serbia, launched a project aimed at contributing to the improvement of the framework for work practice programs as a mechanism for improving youth employability.

4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

The [Social Inclusion and poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia](#) (Tim za socijalno uključivanje i smanjenje siromaštva Vlade Republike Srbije) is the **main governmental authority** responsible for social inclusion in Serbia. It was established in 2009 by the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

Even though there is no specific **national strategy on social inclusion** of young people in Serbia there are two main official documents that refer to the social inclusion of young people:

- [the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) (Nacionalna strategija za mlade 2015-2025),
- [the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and women in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2025](#) (Strategija socijalnog uključivanja Roma i Romkinja za period 2016-2025), as well as the Action Plan for 2017-2018 ([Akcioni plan za 2017-2018](#)) for the implementation of the aforementioned strategy.

One of the most comprehensive **projects aiming at enhancing the social inclusion process** in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2009 – 2021 is the project “[Support to Improve Social Inclusion in the Republic of Serbia](#)” (Podrška unapređenju procesa socijalnog uključivanja u Republici Srbiji) whose activities are financed by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Swiss Confederation, represented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

In addition, the Ministry of Youth and Sport annually announces public calls for proposals for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, seeking to support projects addressing the social inclusion of young people.

Further policy development refers to the near adoption of the National Strategy for Social Protection for the period 2019-2025 by the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Social and Veteran Affairs. Field professionals believe the Strategy will help establish continuity in the reforms of social protection and enable consistency in work in the field of social protection.

4.1 General context

Main challenges to social inclusion

The three main challenges to social inclusion of young people in Serbia are:

- high unemployment rate,
- the high rate of young people who are not employed and not in any education or training systems,
- risk of poverty.

The [National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia](#) (Nacionalni izveštaj o socijalnom uključivanju i smanjenju siromaštva u Republici Srbiji) provides a summary of the status of social exclusion and poverty trends in the period 2014–2017, as well as the challenges faced by Serbian society.

The report especially points out that:

- there is a very high unemployment rate among young people and the high rate of young people who are not employed and not in any education or training systems are serious reasons for concern,
- there is a total of 25.5% of the population (1.79 million people) are at risk of poverty, 19.5% (1.37 million people) are severely materially deprived, and 15.7% (1.01 million people) live in households with low work intensity,

- there is a high risk of poverty in rural areas, since people with lower education attainment are significantly more vulnerable,
- one in five young employed persons worked in the informal sector without the basic legal protection provided by employment/work contracts.

Additionally, the report shows the statistics on employed people according to their professional status - there was an increase in the share of paid workers and a decrease in the share of unpaid family workers in the total number of the employed youth. However, the benefits of this positive trend were enjoyed only by young men, not by young women.

Furthermore, the report emphasizes that more than a half of the total number of youth in the unemployment registry of the National Employment Service are jobless longer than 12 months. The records on the structure of youth in the registry show that the share of youth with no/low qualifications has increased. Also, the share of highly educated youth has increased only slightly. The educational structure of unemployed young women has also seen an increase in the share of women with no/low qualifications.

Lastly, the European Commission's 2016 Report on Serbia ([Izveštaj Evropske komisije o napretku Srbije za 2016. godinu](#)) found that the unemployment rate for graduates with tertiary education (up to 24 years of age) stood at 43.5 % in 2015 and that the emigration of young experts was still high.

The European Commission's 2018 Report on Serbia ([Izveštaj Evropske komisije o napretku Srbije za 2018. godinu](#)) confirms that the unemployment and economic inactivity were still high, particularly among women and youth. It also shows that in the area of social inclusion and protection, in 2016, 7.3% of the population was considered to live in absolute poverty. The share of persons at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion was the highest among all European countries conducting statistics on income and living conditions (SILC), standing at 38.7 % (SILC 2017). The at-risk-of-poverty rate was 25.5 %, implying some 1.8 million people.

Main concepts

Social Inclusion and poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (Tim za socijalno uključivanje i smanjenje siromaštva Vlade Republike Srbije) in its Glossary defines social inclusion as follows:

"Social inclusion is the process enabling those at risk of poverty and social exclusion to have the opportunities and funds required for full participation in the economic, social and cultural life and achieving a living standard and wellbeing considered normal in the society they live in. Social inclusion ensures greater citizen participation in decision making, impacting their lives and ensuring basic rights."

4.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The Social Inclusion and poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (Tim za socijalno uključivanje i smanjenje siromaštva Vlade Republike Srbije) is the main governmental authority responsible for social inclusion in Serbia. The Unit was established by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2009 aiming to strengthen Government and public administration capacities to develop and implement social inclusion policies.

The Unit collaborates with different state, public, private, social stakeholders that are active in the field of social inclusion.

Main national authorities involved are:

- Government of the Republic of Serbia ([Vlada Republike Srbije](#))

- The Social Inclusion and poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia ([Tim za socijalno uključivanje i smanjenje siromaštva Vlade Republike Srbije](#))
- Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs ([Ministarstvo za rad, zapošljavanje, boračka i socijalna pitanja](#))
- Ministry of Youth and Sport ([Ministarstvo omladine i sporta](#))
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development ([Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja](#))
- Ministry of Health ([Ministarstvo zdravlja](#))
- Ministry of Finance ([Ministarstvo finansija](#))
- Ministry of Economy ([Ministarstvo privrede](#))
- Ministry of European Integration ([Ministarstvo za evropske integracije](#))

Main national public institutions involved are:

- National Employment Service ([Nacionalna služba za zapošljavanje](#))
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Serbia ([Privredna komora Srbije](#))
- Republic Statistical Office ([Republički zavod za statistiku](#))
- Republic Institute for Social Protection ([Republički zavod za socijalnu zaštitu](#)).

Additional actors:

- Office for Inclusion of Roma Men and Women of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina ([Kancelarija za inkluziju Roma](#))
- Ombudsman ([Pokrajinski zaštitnik građana](#)). The Ombudsman pays special attention to:
 - rights of members of national minorities
 - children's rights
 - rights of persons with disabilities
 - rights of persons deprived of liberty
 - gender equality
- Commissioner for Protection of Equality ([Poverenik za zaštitu ravnopravnosti](#)): aims to eradicate all kinds of discrimination and contribute to building a tolerant society in which all people enjoy equal rights and have equal opportunities.
- Local Social Services: according to the [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#), the total number of local social services (at the time when the Strategy was being prepared) in 137 local self-governments was 351, while in 37 local communities in Serbia there were no local social services financed from the local self-government budget. Activities of the local services are mostly present in the field of education, health and social welfare.

The main non-public actors are:

- [Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities](#)
- [Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia](#)
- [Trade Union Confederation "Nezavisnost"](#)
- [The Association of Free and Independent Trade Unions](#)
- [Serbian Association of Employers](#)
- [Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations of Serbia](#)
- [European Movement in Serbia](#)

- [Smart Kolektiv – CSR Initiative](#)
- [Foundation for the Advancement of Economics](#)
- [International Student Organization AIESEC](#)

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit is responsible for providing support to the establishment of a monitoring system based on social inclusion indicators as well as for strengthening and developing public administration capacities for monitoring of and reporting on the progress of social inclusion.

Above listed ministries are responsible for social inclusion in their fields of work. The following ministries are responsible for social inclusion of youth in particular, but in collaboration with the Unit as well: the Ministry of Youth and Sport; the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy; the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

Within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Group for Social Inclusion ([Grupa za socijalnu inkluziju](#)) is responsible, among other things, for coordination of initiatives, programmes and projects dealing with social inclusion (social policy, health, youth and sports, state administration and local self-government).

The mentioned public institutions are responsible for providing input (statistics, reports, results of different analyses or surveys) to the ministries, the Unit and the public in general. Both public and non-public actors are involved in the development of policies in the field of youth social inclusion.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

The Social Inclusion and poverty Reduction Unit is the main actor managing social inclusion in Serbia. As such, the Unit initiates and supports collaboration between relevant state, public and private stakeholders. In Serbia, representatives of different sectors (education, health, employment, economy, etc.) of central and local authorities collaborate, but also involve relevant non-public actors in different initiatives and activities.

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

Existence of a national strategy on social inclusion

There is no specific national strategy on social inclusion of young people in Serbia.

However, there are two main official documents that refer to the social inclusion of young people:

- [the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) (Nacionalna strategija za mlade 2015-2025),
- [the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and women in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2025](#) (Strategija socijalnog uključivanja Roma i Romkinja za period 2016-2025), as well as the Action Plan for 2017-2018 ([Akcioni plan za 2017-2018](#)) for the implementation of the aforementioned strategy.

The National Youth Strategy was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on 27 February 2015 for the period 2015-2025. More about the Strategy can be found in Chapter 1/[1.3 National Youth Strategy](#).

The Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and women in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2025 was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on 03 March 2016.

Additionally, following two strategies also serve as important guidelines for overall social inclusion of young people:

- Social Protection Development Strategy ([Strategija razvoja socijalne zaštite](#)) as a leading document for reform and establishment of effective system for social protection,

was adopted in 2005. The process of preparation of a new strategy for the period 2019-2025 has started in 2018.

- National Strategy for Social Housing ([Nacionalna strategija socijalnog stanovanja](#)) represents an important addition to the Social Protection Development Strategy which does not cover the aspect of housing poverty that is covered in the National Strategy for Social Housing. The Strategy was adopted in 2012.

Scope and contents

National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 – Chapter on Social Inclusion of Youth

One of the chapters of the [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) refers to the Social Inclusion of Youth. It recognizes that the youth is exposed to an above average poverty risk (27.3%). This is a consequence of high youth unemployment rate, i.e. a large number of young people who are not employed, do not go to school nor are getting any professional training in the official system of training.

The Strategy identifies the categories of socially vulnerable youth, besides the NEET:

- young people with disabilities,
- LGBT population,
- youth without parental care,
- young Roma, and other.

The Strategy predicts a range of measures aiming to ensure their optimal social inclusion.

Main strategic goal of the Strategy, with regards to social inclusion, is to enhance support for the social inclusion of young people at risk of social exclusion. This goal was defined in line with the recognized problems that refer to the poorly tailored support for young people from different institutions and agencies, as well as to the lack of adequate services and programmes to prevent the risk of social exclusion.

The Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and women 2016-2025

The basic goals of the [Strategy](#) are the reduction of poverty and suppression of discrimination against Roma men and women. The Strategy aims to systematically and comprehensively improve the social inclusion of Roma men and women, both at the national and at the local level. This should be done by creating conditions for full access to the realization of human rights of Roma nationality persons.

The document covers **five priority areas**:

- education,
- housing,
- employment,
- health and
- social protection.

Specific target groups of this strategy divided by age structure are:

- 47.2% are adults,
- 31.1% are elderly and children,
- 21.7% are young people.

It is important to emphasize that children under 17 make up 27.6% of the beneficiaries of all social work centres. They, together with the youth (18-26 years), represent a total of 37.3% of all beneficiaries of centres for social work. They are thus the second largest user group in the centres.

Furthermore, findings from 2014 suggest that the involvement of children and young people from the Roma community in the system of education is unsatisfactory, particularly in secondary and higher education. Thus, the Action Plan 2017-2018 was mainly focused on inclusion of Roma in elementary and secondary education, as well as on prevention of discrimination in schools.

Responsible authority

The top-level authority responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the National Youth Strategy, with regards to social inclusion of youth, are the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans, and Social Affairs.

One [evidence-based evaluation](#) of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy has been conducted for the period 2015/2017. The results can be found in Chapter 1/1.3 National Youth Strategy/Responsible authority for the implementation of the youth strategy.

The [top-level authorities](#) responsible for the preparation and implementation of the **Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and women 2016-2025** are the following:

- the Serbian Government's Council for the Improvement of Roma Status and for Implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion ([Savet za unapređenje položaja Roma i sprovođenje Dekade uključivanja Roma](#)),
- the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction ([Kancelarija za ljudska i manjinska prava](#)),
- the line ministries in charge of public policies of interest for the implementation of the defined strategic measures, and
- the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and Minister of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, who coordinates the work of state bodies, local self-government bodies and public enterprises concerned with the improvement of the status of Roma.

Furthermore, the Government of the Republic of Serbia established the Coordination Body for Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy. The Coordinating Body is headed by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure.

Revisions/updates

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 was preceded by the National Youth Strategy 2011-2014 which expired on the date of publishing the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 (Official Gazette of the RS, no. 55/8). More can be found in Chapter 1/[1.3 National Youth Strategy/ Revisions/updates](#).

The previous strategy for improving the position of Roma in the Republic of Serbia was for the period 2009-2015. It covered the same areas as the currently active strategy (education, housing, employment, health and social protection). Given the fact that the main obstacles to the socio-economic inclusion of Roma men and women have not been eliminated by the implementation of the previous Strategy, the newly developed Strategy aims to solve existing issues through more detailed and tailor-made approach.

4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

Programmes for vulnerable young people

The project "Support to Improve Social Inclusion in the Republic of Serbia" ([Podrška unapređenju procesa socijalnog uključivanja u Republici Srbiji](#)) is a comprehensive project aiming to enhance the social inclusion process in the Republic of Serbia, in period 2009 – 2021. The project activities are financed by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and

the Swiss Confederation, represented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The project supports numerous activities, including those related to programmes/projects for young people. The responsible authority for project implementation is the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit.

There are 2 local programmes including youth supported by this project:

1. "Local Initiatives for Increasing Social Inclusion and Reducing Poverty" ([Lokalne inicijative za povećanje socijalne uključenosti i smanjenje siromaštva](#)) aiming to improve social inclusion and poverty reduction in Serbia by providing support to the development and implementation of effective social inclusion policy measures at the national and local level. This programme supported 11 local projects in period 2015-2016 targeting vulnerable groups, including vulnerable young people.

The second phase of the programme has been initiated in February 2019. [The second call](#) covered two regions in Serbia: Southern and Eastern Serbia, and Šumadija and Western Serbia, i.e. 53 local self-governments. The goal of this call is to contribute to the social inclusion of vulnerable social groups (women, youth, the Roma, migrants, persons with disabilities). Special emphasis was given to those living in rural and extremely poor areas, through the development of innovative approaches to social inclusion at the local level.

2. ["Support to Innovative Approaches to Increasing Youth Employment and Employability"](#) (Program podrške inovativnim pristupima za povećanje zapošljavanja i zapošljivosti mladih) with the overall goal to support innovative approaches in addressing the issues of youth employment or employability through strengthening partnerships between civil society organisations and the private sector. Ten innovative approaches and solutions were supported in 2016, through three different support models, depending on the degree of development of the innovation:

- MODEL 1, encompassing the early development of innovative ideas,
- MODEL 2, testing or improving innovative solutions,
- MODEL 3, expanding the application of innovative approaches.

Additionally, the Ministry of Youth and Sports annually publishes call for applications for programmes and projects of public interest in the field of youth. More precisely, the calls are for:

1. support to local self-government for implementing local youth policy measures ([Javni konkurs za podršku jedinicama lokalne samouprave u sprovođenju omladinske politike na lokalnom nivou](#))
2. enhancing different forms of employment, self-employment and youth entrepreneurship ([Javni konkurs za stimulisanje različitih oblika zapošljavanja, samozapošljavanja i preduzetništva mladih](#))
3. financing and co-financing projects and programmes for implementation of aims defined in National Youth Strategy and Youth Rule programme ([Javni konkurs za finansiranje i sufinansiranje programa i projekata za sprovođenje ciljeva Nacionalne strategije za mlade i programa „Mladi su zakon”](#)). One of the specific goals of this Call is to improve the context of social inclusion of youth in Serbia.

Furthermore, additional financial support to students and persons that are in a risk of poverty provided by the state are:

- National student scholarships and credits ([Učenički i studentski krediti i stipendije](#)) aiming to promote education and support young people to gain higher level of education by providing financial support to students. Both credits and scholarships are non-refundable if the student fulfils some of the obligations of the legal contract (e.g. finishes high-school/ graduates on time with certain average grade). The scholarships are provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

- The Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia ([Fond za mlade talente Republike Srbije](#)), under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, provides scholarships and rewards as well. Annually over 3,300 students receive the financial support from this Fund.
- According to the Law on Social Welfare ([Zakon o socijalnoj zaštiti](#)) following options are available for persons regardless of age (including youth):
 - right to financial social assistance,
 - right to allowance for assistance and care of another person,
 - right to an increased allowance for assistance and care of another person,
 - special monetary compensation,
 - training for work,
 - one-time assistance.

The provision of one-time assistance (in cash or in kind) is within the jurisdiction of local self-government, while funds for other abovementioned payments are provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia.

When it comes to targets for the level of participation in these programmes and the information and data on national organisations involved in the programme, no reliable/updated data on youth participation in these programmes exists.

Funding

The project "[Support to Improve Social Inclusion in the Republic of Serbia](#)" (Podrška unapređenju procesa socijalnog uključivanja u Republici Srbiji) is financed by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Swiss Confederation, represented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The programme "[Local Initiatives for Increasing Social Inclusion and Reducing Poverty](#)" ([Lokalne inicijative za povećanje socijalne uključenosti i smanjenje siromaštva](#)) is financed by the Swiss Government. The total budget of the call 2016 was EUR 122,188, and for the call 2019 CHF 435,000.

The programme "[Support to Innovative Approaches to Increasing Youth Employment and Employability](#)" (Program podrške inovativnim pristupima za povećanje zapošljavanja i zapošljivosti mladih) was financed by the Swiss Government as well. The total budget was CHF 150,000.

Total budget for financing and co-financing projects and programmes of the Ministry of Youth and Sports is allocated from budget of the Republic of Serbia for 2019/Ministry of Youth and Sports, function 810 - Recreation and sports services, appropriation 481 - grants to non-governmental organizations, within the Program 1302 - Youth Policy, Program activities 0005 - Programmes and projects supporting youth in education, upbringing, safety, health and participation. The amounts for 3 types of programmes in 2019 are as follows:

- RSD 15,000,000 for support to local self-government for implementing local youth policy measures ([Javni konkurs za podršku jedinicama lokalne samouprave u sprovođenju omladinske politike na lokalnom nivou](#))
- RSD 70,000,000 for enhancing different forms of employment, self-employment and youth entrepreneurship ([Javni konkurs za stimulisanje različitih oblika zapošljavanja, samozapošljavanja i preduzetništva mladih](#))
- RSD 68,000,000 for financing and co-financing projects and programmes for implementation of aims defined in National Youth Strategy and Youth Rule programme ([Javni konkurs za finansiranje i sufinansiranje programa i projekata za sprovođenje ciljeva Nacionalne strategije za mlade i programa „Mladi su zakon”](#)).

Quality assurance

Applicants whose projects were approved are obliged to submit a narrative and financial report to the responsible authorities, in accordance with the grant agreements. Additionally, taking into consideration all reports for projects approved in separate calls, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit prepares evaluation reports of the overall results of the call.

The evaluation of the programme “Local Initiatives for Increasing Social Inclusion and Reducing Poverty” can be found [here](#).

The periodical evaluation of the programme “Support to Innovative Approaches to Increasing Youth Employment and Employability” can be found [here](#).

4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

Intercultural awareness

The EU-funded projects implemented by top-level authorities in Serbia with the aim of raising intercultural awareness are following:

1. “Implementation of Antidiscrimination Policies in Serbia” (IPA 2011) was implemented in the period 2011-2013 by the [Office for Human and Minority Rights](#) (Kancelarija za ljudska i manjinska prava) and professional service of the [Commissioner for Protection of Equality](#) (služba Poverenika za zaštitu ravnopravnosti). The project, among other, aimed to promote tolerance, equality and diversity, to prevent discrimination and implement and monitor the anti-discrimination policy generally targeted to all citizens including youth.
2. The Office for Human and Minority Rights and the Commissioner for Protection of Equality in cooperation with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights from Austria and the Office for National Minorities of the Republic of Slovenia mutually implemented the twinning project “Support to the advancement of human rights and zero tolerance to discrimination” (“[Podrška unapređenju ljudskih prava i nulta tolerancija za diskriminaciju](#)”). The project was funded by the European Union under IPA 2013. The project aimed at improving implementation of human rights and antidiscrimination policies at national and local level through, among others, implementation of preventive and promotional measures against discrimination using the best practices of the abovementioned project “Implementation of antidiscrimination policies”.

Additionally, the campaign “Together, we are Serbia” (“[Zajedno, mi smo Srbija](#)”) was prepared by the [Office for Human and Minority Rights](#) (Kancelarija za ljudska i manjinska prava) and was active in 2017. The Campaign aimed at raising the public awareness of the richness of diversity of national minorities, cultural and linguistic diversity, and how important it is to preserve and nurture these differences in Serbia, through digital campaigns published online and on TV.

Young people's rights

The Ministry of Youth and Sports, as a part of its regular activities, publishes results of different surveys. One of those surveys is the [Survey on Position and Needs of Youth in the Republic of Serbia](#) ([Pozicija i potrebe mladih u Srbiji](#)).

As already mentioned in Chapter 1/[1.6 Evidence Based Youth Policy/National Statistics](#) and available data source, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has been conducting regular annual surveys since 2008 aiming to analyse the rights, status, challenges, attitudes on social issues that young people in Serbia share. The Ministry’s aim is to incorporate these findings into youth policy-making processes. Therefore, research on the position and needs of

young people, realized at the national level, remain one of the basic starting points of the Ministry for the development and monitoring of the implementation of strategic documents in the field of youth policy, as well as for setting priorities in financing programs and projects of public interest in the youth sector.

The last Survey on Position and Needs of Youth in the Republic of Serbia was carried out in November 2016.

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

In Serbia, at the national level, no initiative was established that would be directed solely to the prevention of radicalization leading to the violent extremism of young people.

However, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development implements numerous activities and campaigns against violence in schools and among peers. Umbrella programme for these activities is the programme "School without Violence" ("[Škola bez nasilja](#)"). The programme aims to prevent and reduce violence in schools, with the ultimate goal to support development of the enabling and stimulating school environment and safe surroundings for students. The programme has begun in 2005. and still remains active.

Another important initiative is the project "Stop Digital Violence" ("Zaustavimo digitalno nasilje") of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. Within this project, following activities are being conducted: promotional campaigns, educational trainings and conferences, development of manuals, etc. All these activities target students and pupils active on the internet. One of the important outputs of the project is the manual "Digital Violence – Prevention and Response" (priručnik "[Digitalno nasilje – prevencija i reagovanje](#)").

4.6 Access to quality services

[The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) (see Chapter 1/[1.3 National Youth Strategy](#)) recognizes that the services intended for young people from socially vulnerable categories are mainly organised through traditional institutions (schools, social work centres, branches of the National Employment Service, etc.). In addition, and even more in time, local services take over especially in the fields of education, health and social welfare.

Housing

When it comes to housing, the most common services recognized in the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 are:

- the service of day-care for children and youth with disabilities,
- the service of day-care for children and youth with physical disabilities,
- the service of supported housing for youth independent living.

The listed services are financed by the local self-governments. However, the service of supported housing for persons with disabilities is financed by the state. This is not the case if the development of the local self-government is above the state average.

The service of supported housing for youth independent living is targeting young people unable to live independently. The purpose of the service is to help and support beneficiaries to gain complete independence and help their integration into the community. This service provides the beneficiary a chance to gain skills necessary for independent living. This service has a limited duration as it is expected that the beneficiary will be able, in time, to live independently, without any support. Duration of the service depends on the assessment whether a young person, with the appropriate preparation and support, can master life skills, take responsibility for future personal life, and live independently.

More information for all beneficiaries – youth, self-government, service providers, professionals working with youth and people with disadvantages, can be found in the Manual for Supported Living ([Smernice za stanovanje uz podršku](#)) developed by the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs.

Social services

Social protection services in Serbia, presented in the document “[Mapping of Social Protection Services under the Competence of Local Self-Government Units in the Republic of Serbia](#)” (“[Mapiranje usluga socijalne zaštite u nadležnosti jedinica lokalnih samouprava u Republici Srbiji](#)”) include:

1. **Day care community-based services** including day care for children/youth with developmental and other disabilities, home care, child personal attendant and drop-in centre.
2. **Services for independent living** including personal assistance for adult persons with disabilities, supportive housing for youth who start living independently and supportive housing for persons with disabilities. This group of services also includes training/ education programmes to facilitate clients’ transition to independence and enhancement of independent living skills. See previous paragraph Housing.
3. **Counselling/therapy and social/educational services** including intensive support services for families in crises through counselling and support to parents, foster parents and adoptive parents, families caring for their children or adult members with developmental disabilities; fostering family relations and family reunification; counselling and support in cases of violence; family therapy and mediation; helplines; activation and other counselling and education activities.
4. **Emergency and temporary accommodation services** including placement in a shelter (for various target groups), respite care and other similar types of accommodation.

Main youth target groups are youth leaving the social protection system and personal assistance, youth with developmental and other disabilities, as well as violence victims (including youth).

According to the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, local services for youth are mostly present in the field of education, health and social welfare. The total number of local social services (at the time when the Strategy was being prepared) in 137 local self-governments was 351, while in 37 local communities in Serbia there were no local social services financed from the local self-government budget.

As for services for children and youth, the most common services are the ones related to housing (see previous paragraph Housing).

The pre-requisite for the sustainability of social services is that they are institutionalized - that there is a local government’s decision on their financing.

Youth policy, i.e. the National Youth Strategy, stresses the need to develop non-institutional services to provide youth from socially vulnerable groups basic competences on how to use the existing (traditional) system of support.

However, specific integrated social services designed to address multiple underlying issues of young people at risk of social exclusion simultaneously do not exist.^{[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][14][15][16][17][18][19][20][21][22][23][24][25][26][27][28][29][30][31][32][33][34][35][36][37][38][39][40][41][42][43][44][45][46][47][48][49][50][51][52][53][54][55][56][57][58][59][60][61][62][63][64][65][66][67][68][69][70][71][72][73][74][75][76][77][78][79][80][81][82][83][84][85][86][87][88][89][90][91][92][93][94][95][96][97][98][99][100]}

Health care

An overview of health services for youth in Serbia can be found in the Youth Health Development Strategy ([Strategija razvoja zdravlja mladih u Republici Srbiji](#)).

Health care for children of school age and young people who do not belong to a group of students is realized through the work of:

- pediatric services, general health care services, occupational medicine and gynecology, polyvalent health care services;
- youth counseling services within the health care centers;
- mental health dispensers.

For the **student population in universities and colleges**, primary health care is well organized and developed in Belgrade, Nis and Novi Sad. It is realized through the services of health promotion, general medicine, gynaecology, mental health. For students in Kragujevac, health care is provided in the health centers.

At the secondary and tertiary levels, the health service is not particularly adapted for youth, and especially to the youth population aged 19-26 years.

For the age range 10-19, health services are provided in children's departments in general hospitals, children's clinics and institutes for children and youth, and in some specialized institutions.

Young people above 19 years of age, except in exceptional cases, are treated and hospitalized together with adult patients at specialized departments of general hospitals, clinics and institutes. However, students from the University of Belgrade have a specially provided health care in Institute for Students Health of Belgrade University.

The professional development for health care mediators and the support for development of a national health mediators' network are not established on the top-level in Serbia.

Financial services

The Law on Financial Support for Families with Children ([Zakon o finansijskoj podršci porodici sa decom](#)) secures the right to the child allowance. Target groups are the persons that do not own immovable assets on the territory of the Republic of Serbia nor have income from agriculture.

Additionally, the City of Belgrade has established permanent financial support to young people leaving the social protection system. This was established by the Decision on the rights and services of social protection of the City of Belgrade ([Odluka o pravima i uslugama socijalne zaštite Grada Beograda](#)). The right to this financial support is provided to children without parental care, users of accommodation services who are capable to work, in a monthly amount of 50% of the salary. The financial support can be received from the date of the termination of the accommodation service until the establishment of the employment, for a maximum of one year, provided that they, at least two years before the completion of their education, have lived on the territory of the City of Belgrade.

Additionally, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development annually provides scholarships for high-school students and students of public universities. Also, the Ministry provides student loans for students that were under the threshold for scholarship.

Furthermore, the Fund for Young Talents ([Fond za mlade talente](#)) supports the best students of final years of university/high-school with scholarships.

Quality assurance

There is no particular and comprehensive quality assurance system to monitor the quality of these services.

4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

The Ministry of Youth and Sport annually announces public calls for proposals for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, seeking to support projects addressing the social inclusion of young people.

In 2018, nearly EUR 34,000 were allocated for 4 projects addressing social inclusion of young people with disabilities, education and capacity building of youth/for youth organisations and youth offices on inclusion of youth from socially vulnerable groups. Throughout 2018, the Ministry of Youth and Sport supported through public calls projects implemented by associations and local self-government units that have youth offices, aiming to improve the conditions and mechanisms that foster youth employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship. This was achieved through cross-sectoral cooperation and provided the opportunity for young people at risk of social exclusion to acquire the necessary life skills.

From 2014 to 2018, the Ministry supported projects of the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (see [Glossary](#)) totalling over EUR 270,000. Through these projects, the research "Impact of youth work and non-formal education on youth employability" was conducted as well as "EU study of good practices of existing mechanisms for recognition of competences acquired through non-formal education in youth work". Additionally, the employability of young people through small local projects was improved and a manual for online learning as well as a document "The Impact of Social Innovation on Overcoming Marginalization and Youth Unemployment" were developed.

Furthermore, there are a few youth work programmes implemented by public institutions aiming to foster social inclusion in Serbia, such as:

- [Project of the European Union in Serbia](#), aiming to support youth inclusion and employability, will be implemented in more than 35 cities and municipalities throughout the country in 2019-2020. The total budget of the project is **EUR 4,7 million**. The project is financed by the European Union and the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The project will award grants to organizations at national and local levels aiming to help youth employability, acquiring knowledge, skills and work experience.
- A comprehensive project "[Support to Improve Social Inclusion in the Republic of Serbia](#)" (Podrška unapređenju procesa socijalnog uključivanja u Republici Srbiji) led by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit aims to enhance the social inclusion process in the Republic of Serbia, in the period 2009 – 2021. More can be found in [4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people/Programmes for vulnerable young people](#).

[The National Employment Action Plan for 2019](#) (Nacionalni akcioni plan zapošljavanja 2019) points out that in 2019, the status of hard-to-employ persons who will be prioritised for inclusion in active labour market measures is given to:

- youth up to 30 years of age,
- redundant workers,
- persons above 50 years of age,
- persons with no/low qualifications,
- persons with disabilities,
- the Roma,
- working able beneficiaries of financial social assistance,
- long-term unemployed persons (registered as unemployed for over 12 months, especially those unemployed for over 18 months),
- youth in institutional care,
- youth in foster families,
- youth in guardian families, and
- victims of domestic violence.

Data on public funding allocated for youth target groups is not available.

4.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Ministry of Labour, Employment, Social and Veteran Affairs prepared a Draft of National Strategy for Social Protection for the period 2019-2025 ([Nacrt strategije socijalne zaštite za period 2019-2025](#)).

The Strategy helps establish continuity in the reforms of social protection and enables consistency in work in the field of social protection. The Strategy will be used as a basis for the allocation of funds intended for the protection of the vulnerable groups in the Republic of Serbia. The draft strategy focuses on the further improvement of the social protection system, but also takes into account the broader social, political, fiscal and institutional framework.

The public hearing/consulting process took place in May 2019, while the final adoption of the Strategy is expected by the end of 2019.

Ongoing debates

The [Third National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia](#) (Treći nacionalni izveštaj o socijalnom uključivanju i smanjenju siromaštva u Republici Srbiji) lists the recommendations for approval of social inclusion of youth in fields of employment, education, social and child protection, pensions, health and health care, housing, human rights and social participation.

Some of the recommendations provided are:

- prioritisation of the vulnerable categories of young people, followed by the adequate allocation of funds,
- special attention should be devoted to the position of young women in the labour market, the youth with no/low qualifications and the youth who have been unemployed for over 12 months,
- new outreach measures should be introduced in the work of the institutions responsible for employment and education, to enable the outreach to those young people who are discouraged and passive in the labour market,
- it is necessary to institutionalize mechanisms for early recognition of children who are at risk of leaving the education system
- further work on removing discriminatory content from individual textbooks is necessary, and appropriate professional development programmes need to be elaborated,
- it is necessary to change the funding model at all levels of education,
- new measures are needed to enhance the participation of Roma children and the poorest stratum of society in education,
- particular focus should be put on the support mechanisms for the implementation of youth employment programmes,
- Improvement of the policy framework and its adaptation to the needs of youth, with a view to formalising every type of work in which young people engage (e.g. by developing the concept of student jobs with a limited weekly number of working hours,²⁵⁸ enhancing the legal and qualitative framework that regulates traineeship²⁵⁹ and so on), etc.

Additionally, part of the Analysis of the position of young people at risk, including recommendations for improving their social and economic inclusion ("[Analiza položaja mladih u riziku koja uključuje i preporuke za unapređenje njihove socijalne i ekonomske inkluzije](#)") was included in the Draft of National Strategy for Social Protection for the period 2019-2025 ([Nacrt strategije socijalne zaštite za period 2019-2025](#)). This part refers to the recommendation to develop a new type of financial support to the child and the young

person leaving the social protection system. This support would be financed from the state budget and would be available for all young people leaving social protection throughout the country, regardless of their place of residence. This way, all young people would have equal rights to the financial support. The support would amount to 50% of the average salary in the country and would be paid monthly on a two-year basis (approximately 100 users per year).

5. PARTICIPATION

The Law on Youth, in its Article 8 Active Youth Participation Principle contains the main concept related to youth participation which captures distinctive understanding and aspects of youth participation in Serbia.

The Republic of Serbia is a **parliamentary democracy** and voting age limit for all types of elections is set at 18 years old. There are no special provisions for young people in the electoral law and/or rules.

Young people of age (after turning 18) and working ability of the Republic of Serbia can become members of political parties, in accordance with the Law on political parties ([Zakon o političkim strankama](#)).

Youth parliament in the Republic of Serbia does not exist while Youth Council is established by the [Law on Youth](#) (Zakon o mladima).

The highest representative body of students at Serbian universities, regulated by the Law on Higher Education is Student Conference of Serbian Universities (SKONUS). Its members are student representatives from all the Student Parliaments of the accredited universities in Serbia.

Other relevant bodies supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sport are the National Youth Council of Serbia ([Krovna organizacija mladih Srbije](#), KOMS), as well as the work and development of the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners ([Nacionalna asocijacija praktičara/ki omladinskog rada](#), NAPOR) and the National Association of Local Youth Offices ([Nacionalna asocijacija Kancelarija za mlade](#)).

There is no separate strategy particularly addressing youth participation.

5.1 General context

Main concepts

The [Law on Youth](#), in its Article 8 Active Youth Participation Principle contains the main concept related to youth participation which captures distinctive understanding and aspects of youth participation in Serbia:

"Everybody, in particular Youth Policy actors, shall ensure a stimulating environment and offer active support in the implementation of young people's youth activities, in their taking initiative and in their purposeful involvement in decision-making processes and processes of decision implementation, which decisions contribute to personal and social development, upon young people's receiving complete information".

Furthermore, [Serbian Youth Strategy \(2015-2025\)](#) in its vision statement says: the youth shall be active participants and participants with equal rights in all areas of social life; the ones that can fully develop their potential and contribute to their personal and social benefit. The youth shall have support from the society to create better conditions of life and develop potential as well as to actively contribute to the overall social advancement.

Institutions of representative democracy

The [Constitution of the Republic of Serbia](#) (Ustav Republike Srbije) defines Serbia as a country of Serbian people and all citizens who live in it, based on the rule of law and social justice, principles of civil democracy, human and minority rights and freedoms, and commitment to European principles and values.

By its constitutional structure the Republic of Serbia is a **parliamentary democracy**.

Government system is based on the division of power into legislative, executive and judiciary.

National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (Narodna skupština Republike Srbije) has the legislative power.

The National Assembly:

- adopts and amends the Constitution,
- decides on changes concerning borders of the Republic of Serbia,
- calls for the Republic referendum,
- ratifies international contracts when the obligation of their ratification is stipulated by the Law,
- decides on war and peace and declare state of war and emergency,
- supervises the work of security services,
- enacts laws and other general acts within the competence of the Republic of Serbia,
- gives previous approval for the Statute of the autonomous province,
- adopts defense strategy, development plan, spatial plan and the Budget and financial statement of the Republic of Serbia
- grants amnesty for criminal offences.

Within its election rights, the National Assembly:

- elects the Government, supervises its work and decides on expiry of the term of office of the Government and ministers,
- appoints and dismisses judges of the Constitutional Court,
- appoints the President of the Supreme Court of Cassation, presidents of courts, Republic Public Prosecutor, public prosecutors, judges and deputy public prosecutors,
- appoints and dismisses the Governor of the National Bank of Serbia and supervise his/her work,
- appoints and dismisses the Civic Defender and supervise his/her work, 6. appoint and dismiss other officials stipulated by the Law.

Executive power is divided between the President and the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

The President of the Republic of Serbia:

- represents the Republic of Serbia in the country and abroad,
- promulgates laws upon his decree, in accordance with the Constitution,
- proposes to the National Assembly a candidate for the Prime Minister, after considering views of representatives of elected lists of candidates,
- proposes to the National Assembly holders of positions, in accordance with the Constitution and Law,
- appoints and dismisses, upon his/her decree, ambassadors of the Republic of Serbia, upon the proposal of the Government,
- receives letters of credit and revocable letters of credit of foreign diplomatic representatives,
- grants amnesties and award honours,
- administers other affairs stipulated by the Constitution.

The Government:

- establishes and pursues policy,

- executes laws and other general acts of the National Assembly,
- adopts regulations and other general acts for the purpose of law enforcement,
- proposes to the National Assembly laws and other general acts and gives its opinion on those laws and general acts, when another mover proposes them,
- directs and adjust the work of public administration bodies and perform supervision of their work,
- administers other affairs stipulated by the Constitution and Law.

The Government accounts to the National Assembly for the policy of the Republic of Serbia, for enforcement of laws and other general acts of the National Assembly, as well as for the work of the public administration bodies.

The Government consists of the Prime Minister, one or more Vice Presidents and ministers.

Judiciary power belongs to courts of general and special jurisdiction. The judiciary power is independent and unique on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. Courts are separated and independent in their work.

The Supreme Court of Cassation is the Supreme Court in the Republic of Serbia with the seat in Belgrade. The hearing before the court is public and may be restricted only in accordance with the Constitution. Judges and jurors participate in a trial, in the manner stipulated by the Law.

However, state power is restricted by the right of citizens to **provincial autonomy and local self-government**.

Serbia has [198 municipalities](#) and local self-government is divided into municipal assembly, mayor, municipal council and administration.

Main principles concerning elections

Every citizen of age and working ability of the Republic of Serbia has the right to vote and be elected.

Voting in Serbia is voluntary and is carried out **by secret ballot in person**.

Voting takes place at special polling stations. Voters receive a ballot paper listing the names of the parties and the candidates running for election and voters select the party or the candidate they vote for. Votes are then cast in polling booths. Additionally, there is a possibility to vote outside the district of permanent residence, as well as to vote from abroad.

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

Young people as voters

Voting age limit for all types of elections is set at 18 years old.

There are no imminent plans to lower the voting age limit.

There are no special provisions for young people in the electoral law and/or rules.

There is no data on the turnout of young people in the elections.

Young people as political representatives

Members of political parties

Young people of age and working ability of the Republic of Serbia can become members of political parties, in accordance with the Law on political parties ([Zakon o političkim strankama](#)). A person becomes of age after turning 18.

Candidacy

The age limit for standing as a candidate is 18 years.

There is no quota of seats reserved for young people nor existing provisions aiming at facilitating young people standing as political candidates.

Young people as elected representatives

Currently at the [National Parliament](#) there are no members under the age of 30. The average age of the [members of the parliament](#) is slightly over 51. No function within the representative assembly is explicitly reserved for young people.

5.3 Youth representation bodies

Youth parliament

Youth parliament in the Republic of Serbia does not exist.

Youth Council

Structure

The existence of the Youth Council is established by the [Law on Youth](#) (Zakon o mladima). According to the Law on Youth, the Government forms a Youth Council as an advisory body initiating and harmonising activities related to the development and implementation of Youth Policy and proposing measures for its improvement.

In 2014 the Government issued a decision on the establishment of Youth Council ([Savet za mlade](#)), which was a significant step forward in the monitoring and further development of the National Youth Policy.

Youth Council is a public body which members are representatives of:

- state administration,
- the province of Vojvodina administrative body,
- youth organizations and associations,
- youth offices,
- national minority councils,
- experts.

Composition

Youth Council has 24 members, while 1/3 of the Youth Council is made up of youth representatives. Members of the Council are:

- president,
- ten representatives of state bodies,
- one representative of the province of Vojvodina administrative body,
- one representative of national minority councils,
- two representatives of youth offices,
- one expert and
- eight representatives of youth organisations and associations.

Additionally, representatives of different public institutions and youth and for youth organisations (such as state secretaries, special adviser of the minister, additional representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, National Youth Council of Serbia-KOMS, etc.) can attend [Youth Council meetings](#).

Ministry of Youth and Sports announces public call for nomination/application of members for the Youth Council (Javni poziv za predlaganje/prijavljivanje kandidata za članstvo u Savetu za mlade). The Ministry establishes the Commission that deals with the evaluation and selection of members. Public institutions active in the field of youth separately nominate representatives for the membership in the Youth Council.

Youth Council meetings are being held at least two times a year.

Role and responsibilities

The role of the Youth Council is defined by the Law on Youth (Zakon o mladima), as an advisory body that is initiating and harmonizing activities related to the development and implementation of Youth Policy and proposing measures for its improvement.

The Youth Council responsibilities are to:

- propose measures for Youth Policy improvement,
- propose measures for harmonizing and coordinating the activities of different ministries and other bodies active in the youth sector in accordance with strategic and legal acts in this field,
- as the advisory body of the Government, ensure that the voice of young people is being heard and respected, enabling young people to participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of the public policies.

Funding

Youth Council is advisory public body financed from the state budget.

Higher education student union(s)

Structure

Student Conference of Serbian Universities (SKONUS) is the highest representative body of students at Serbian universities, regulated by the Law on Higher Education. It was established for reaching mutual interests of students as partners in higher education process in Serbia, coordinating work and establishing a common policy of the Student Parliaments of Serbian Universities, and running operations stipulated by the law. SKONUS's members are student representatives from all the Student Parliaments of the accredited universities in Serbia.

SKONUS acts through several branches. Those organs are the following:

1. Assembly
2. President
3. Presidency
4. Parliamentary Committee
5. Presidential Council
6. Secretariat
7. Alumni Club

Composition

The Assembly **consists of student representatives delegated by the Student Parliaments of the Serbian University.** The Assembly have the President, the Vice-Presidents and the Secretary of the Assembly. The President, Vice-President and the Secretary of the Assembly are elected from the ranks of the Assembly.

The President is elected by the Assembly for a period of two years.

Presidency is the highest decision-making body between the two sessions of the Assembly. The quorum for the work of the Presidency is the presence of 7 (seven) members of the Presidency. The Presidency adopts regulations, decisions and resolutions.

The **Parliamentary committee** has a president, deputy president and board members. Board members are verified by the Presidency. Rulebook on the work of the board is made by the Presidency. Each board has its own Rules of Procedure developed by the Presidency.

SKONUS has 11 boards:

- Reform and Development of Higher Education Board
- International Co-operation Board
- Cooperation with the Economy Board
- Student Standard Board
- Science Board
- Environment Protection Board
- Sports and Public Health Promotion Board
- International Projects Accession Board
- Volunteering and Humanitarian Affairs Board
- Culture Board
- Students Professional Development Board

The Presidential Council coordinates the work of student universities in Serbia. The Presidency Council gives opinions and recommendations regarding issues under SKONUS' jurisdiction. The Presidential Council meets at least once during the semester. Members of the Council are the President, the Deputy President, the Presidents or the Vice-Rectors of the Member Universities. The Council has its Rules of Procedure.

The work of the **Secretariat** is managed and coordinated by the Secretary General. Coordinators and Sector Members are appointed by the Presidency. The Secretary General is elected by the procedure and in the manner determined by the Statute.

The Secretariat has 7 sectors:

1. Finance Sector
2. Public Relations Sector
3. Sector for Projects
4. Information Technology Sector
5. Sector for Legal Affairs
6. Training and Education Sector
7. Sector for Logistics

The **Alumni Club** is an honorary Advisory Body of SKONUS. The alumni club consists of all members of the SKONUS Presidency since its inception. The sessions of the Alumni Club are held at least once a year.

The sessions are called by the Alumni Club and are chaired by the President. The sessions of the Alumni Club may be attended by members of the Presidency and other interested parties. The Alumni Club connects the prominent members of SKONUS with the aim of establishing their continuous co-operation. The alumni provide advice and opinions to SKONUS members. The Alumni Club issues its own Rules of Procedure.

Role and responsibilities

The objectives of the Conference are:

- Consider issues of mutual interest for the promotion of higher education in the Republic of Serbia
- Harmonizes attitudes and coordinates the activities of student university parliaments, particularly in the area of enrollment policy, as well as in the field of studies quality improvement
- Cooperation with the Conference of Serbian Universities
- Providing an opinion to the Ministry of Education, science and technological development, the National Council for Higher Education and the Conference of Serbian University on providing, controlling and promoting educational-scientific activities at universities.
- Proposing measures to improve student standard
- Considering the issues and reports provided by the Ministry, the National Council for Higher Education
- Selecting and dissolving student representatives at the National Council for Higher Education
- Representing the students' interests of at the international level
- Delivering student representatives to all bodies at the national level
- Considering other issues of common interest to students

Funding

The funds for the work of student conferences are provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia.

School student union(s)

School student union as a part of national system structure does not exist.

However, the Union of Secondary School Students of Serbia exists as a non-governmental organisation founded in 2003.

Structure

The Union is independent in its work.

The Union is represented at the Ministry of youth and sport and Ministry of education and science, UNICEF, National Democratic Institute, Umbrella Youth Organisation of Serbia etc.

The main organs running the Union are:

- Assembly;
- Steering Committee;
- Alumni Council;
- Supervising Committee.

Composition

There are two types of membership in the Union. Members can be School Student Councils from upper secondary schools and team membership for school students.

In the Union, there are approximately 100,000 school students and 192 student councils.

For the membership in the Union, applicants fill in the form which is later evaluated by the Steering Committee.

Steering Committee Mandate lasts for 2 years, while mandate of the rest of the Union's bodies last for 1 year.

Assembly is in session once a year, while Supervising Committee meets at least 3 times per year. Meeting of the Steering Committee and Alumni Council are not regulated.

There are no public measures or guidelines facilitating greater inclusiveness and diversity.

Role and responsibilities

The Union of Secondary School Students of Serbia is founded with the aim to represent and advocate secondary school students on national and European level.

UNSS is one of the eight European organisations to run a Social Day – a day when school students are volunteering in order to earn money for improving their school environment and cultural life.

Main aims of the Union are:

- Democratisation of school student councils;
- Making an institutional frame for student participation in the process of decision making in schools;
- Empowering and strengthening the capacities of student councils;
- Informal education of school students;
- Encouragement of activism among students;
- Giving a chance to school students to implement their own projects;
- Promotion of creative values and cultural life;
- Affirmation of young artists;
- Making an open, inclusive and safe school community.

The main domains of the Union's activity are inclusion, voluntarism, activism and participation.

The Union does not have a direct role in policy-making, however, the Union is a member of the [Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions](#) which participates in the European youth and education policy-making with regards to high-school students.

Funding

The funds are obtained from:

- Voluntary contributions from members;
- Voluntary contributions of other natural and legal persons;
- Donations or sponsorships;
- Other sources in accordance with the law.

Other bodies

The Ministry of Youth and Sport supported the establishment of the National Youth Council of Serbia ([Krovna organizacija mladih Srbije](#), KOMS), as well as the work and development of the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners ([Nacionalna asocijacija praktičara/ki omladinskog rada](#), NAPOR) and the National Association of Local Youth Offices ([Nacionalna asocijacija Kancelarija za mlade](#)).

KOMS is the biggest representative youth body in Serbia gathering over [100 youth and for youth organisations](#). KOMS member can be youth or for youth organisations or association of organisations that is registered in Serbia, but only if it is not already a member of any of the organisations that are members of KOMS.

The main responsibilities of KOMS are divided among:

- the Assembly;
- the Steering Committee;
- the Supervisor Committee;
- the Secretary General.

Roles of KOMS are:

- formulating policies, values and professional opinions in the field of youth work and in relation to youth work;
- participating in public hearings regarding Youth Policy,
- participating in Youth Council and monitoring implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025,
- organizing events, seminars, counseling in the field of Youth Policy and other policies important for youth,
- cooperating with public institutions, different national and international organisations,
- capacity building of its members,
- collecting and processing youth policy documentation and publications.

KOMS receives funds from membership fees, donations, gifts, financial subsidies and other.

NAPOR is the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners gathering [51 youth and for youth organisations](#). It is a vocational association of youth organisations whose mission is to create and develop conditions for quality assurance and recognition of youth work with the aim of developing potential of youth and youth workers, who contribute to welfare of community and society. Member of NAPOR can be any organization active in the field of youth work practitioners registered in Serbia.

The main responsibilities of KOMS are divided among:

- the Assembly;
- the Steering Committee;
- the Executive Director;
- the Supervisor Committee;
- the Council for Ethical Questions.

The roles of NAPOR are to:

- formulate policies, values and professional opinions in the field of youth work and in relation to youth work;
- collect and process scientific and professional literature in the field of youth work and related areas;
- organize, alone or together with other organizations, professional meetings, counseling, seminars and other forms of education in the field of youth work;
- publish books and other publications on issues related to youth work;
- conduct research on topics and issues of relevance for the development of youth work;
- create educational programs that respond to the needs of youth, youth workers and communities;

- cooperate with universities and faculties, institutions, professional associations and their associations, or other relevant organizations (and individuals) in country and abroad;
- promote equality of opportunity, access to education and encourage continuous learning and improvement;
- advocates respect for human and minority rights and to actively involve young people in every sphere of public life;
- ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups and promote equality among youth and youth workers.

NAPOR receives funds from membership fees, donations, gifts, financial subsidies and other. Additionally, NAPOR generates income through consulting activities.

5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

Formal mechanisms of consultation

- **Legal provisions on youth consultation**

Participatory mechanisms related to policy-making in general are addressed by the following policies:

1. [Law on Youth](#) (Zakon o mladima)
2. [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) (Strategija za mlade 2015-2025)
3. [Action plan 2015-2017](#) and [Action plan 2018-2020](#) for implementing National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 (Akcioni planovi 2015-2017 i Akcioni plan 2018-2020 za sprovođenje Strategije za mlade 2015-2025)
4. Confirmation Law on Aarhus Convention ([Zakon o potvrđivanju Konvencije o dostupnosti informacija, učešću javnosti u donošenju odluka i pravu na pravnu zaštitu u pitanjima životne sredine](#) (Arhuska konvencija)).

The **Law on Youth** is the main policy document addressing the youth rights and regulating measures and activities undertaken by the Republic of Serbia. These measures and activities are aimed at improving the social status and position of youth and at creating conditions for addressing young people's needs and interests.

As such, the Law represents a support to young people in organisation, social activism, development and fulfilment of their potential. The Law regulates and supports 6 principles that set the foundation of the youth policy in Serbia (see [Chapter 1/National Youth Law/Scope and Context](#)). Two of those principles are related to youth activism and participation: Principle of **Raising Awareness on the Importance of Youth and their Social Role and Active Youth Participation Principle**.

Through the **Principle of Raising Awareness on the Importance of Youth and their Social Role**, the Law ensures that everybody, in particular Youth Policy actors, will encourage and support the raising of awareness on the importance of young people and the social role of young people. This would be done through Youth Policy implementation, social empowerment for the purposes of youth well-being, promotion and protection of their interests and needs and creating opportunities for active participation in the society.

Through the **Active Youth Participation Principle**, the Law ensures a stimulating environment, supports the implementation of young people's youth activities, their initiatives and involvement in decision-making processes. Furthermore, the Law ensures youth participation in processes of decision implementation as well, which decisions contribute to personal and social development, upon young people's receiving complete information.

In addition, the Law regulates the participation of youth in Youth Policy development and monitoring by regulating the establishment of the Youth Council. The Law sets the number of representatives of young people at no less than one-third of the Youth Council membership, thus ensuring that the voice of young people is heard and respected.

The **National Youth Strategy** underlines that young people are active and equal participants in all spheres of social life. It stipulates that they should fully develop their potential and contribute to personal development, as well as to the overall development of society. That being said, the Strategy addresses, among other, the importance of young people and their social roles and active youth participation and cooperation. Furthermore, the Strategy sets 9 strategic goals (see Chapter 1/[1.3 National Youth Strategy/Scope and Contents](#)), one of which in particular addressing active participation of young women and men in society. In terms of that, specific goals of the Strategy are:

- Improving legal and policy framework for the inclusion of young women and men's perspective and youth participation in decision-making processes and youth policy development;
- Establishing conditions for capacity building and synergy in the activities of Youth Policy Actors, sustainable development and inclusion of a greater number of youth activity associations;
- Improving conditions for volunteering of young people and for young people;
- Increasing participation of young people in environmental protection and sustainable development.

Action Plans 2015-2017 and 2018-2020 for implementation of the National Youth Strategy provide indicators for measuring: level of realization, duration of realization, level of implementation (national, provincial, local), participating actors, verification of indicators of specific goals and activities, total funds necessary for realization.

The Confirmation Law on [Aarhus Convention](#), confirms the international convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters. The Law acknowledges:

- the right to receive environmental information that is held by public authorities - **access to environmental information**,
- the right to participate in environmental decision-making - **public participation in environmental decision-making**,
- the right to review procedures that have been made without respecting the two aforementioned rights or environmental law in general - **access to justice**.

The Confirmation Law on Aarhus Convention refers only to consultation mechanisms to policies of environmental matters.

The Law on Youth, the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 with the Action Plans refer to youth consultation mechanisms to policies directly influencing the situation of young people.

• **Level of consultation**

Young people in Serbia are officially consulted at national, regional (at the level of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina) and local levels.

• **Consultation method**

The main method for consulting young people at national level is through the Youth Council (see section [5.3 Youth representation bodies/Youth council](#)) and Student Conference of Serbian Universities (SKONUS) (see section [5.3 Youth representation bodies/Higher-education unions](#)). This consultation is directed mainly to the monitoring of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy. Other consultation processes happen through the public hearings that involve public in general, through the working groups

involving representatives of young people or ad hoc upon initiative of the Government or other public institutions.

At the level of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, consultation with youth are being held through Vojvodina Youth Forum (Forum mladih Vojvodine) and Youth Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (Savet za mlade APV).

At the local level, youth is being consulted through Local Youth Councils (see Chapter 1/1.4 [Youth policy decision-making/Structure of decision-making](#)) as a body that allows young people to actively participate in decision-making.

- **Regularity of consultations**

The consultations through the Youth Council and Local Youth Councils are regular, while other consultations mainly take place on a case-by-case basis.

Actors

Youth actors

Young people that are members of the Youth Council (see Chapter 5/5.3 [Youth Representation Bodies/Youth Council](#)) are representatives of youth and for youth organisations and associations. When it comes to the surveys on the youth position, needs, employability, etc. the youth in general is being questioned.

Specific target groups

There is no distinct provision for specific target groups. However, the Law on Youth stipulates that any unjustified difference made between young people, on any grounds (the grounds of race, gender, nationality, religious belief, language, social background, financial standing, affiliation with political, trade union or other organizations, mental or physical disability, health, physical appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other) is prohibited.

Furthermore, the National Youth Strategy specifically recognizes the groups of young people who are vulnerable, marginalised, at risk of social exclusion and poverty as well as those who are exposed to multiple discrimination and exclusion. The Strategy underlines that there is a need to provide support to these groups of young people and better identification of vulnerable young people.

Public authorities

Public authorities represented in youth consultation processes are from the Government and line ministries active in the field of youth:

- Ministry of Youth and Sport;
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development;
- Ministry of Labour, Employment, Social and Veteran Affairs;
- Ministry of Finances;
- Ministry of Culture and Information;
- Ministry of Interior;
- Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sports,
- Local self-governments.

Additional stakeholders

Additional stakeholders that are members of the Youth Council are the representatives of youth and for youth organisations, Military Academy, representatives of Youth Offices and experts from the field of Youth Policy.

Information on the extent of youth participation

Public authorities do not collect data on young people's participation in the consultation processes. However, on the basis of minutes of the meetings this data can be found for some consultation processes. On the other hand, this type of data can be found in the different documents. For example, in the National Youth Strategy can be found that prior to the finalization of the Strategy, 5 public hearings were conducted through public debates and round-tables attended by several thousand young people.

Outcomes

Main outcomes

The input usually requested from young people is regarding the implementation of the National Youth Strategy, assessment of the Youth Policy or its revision, as well as regarding the youth position, needs, employability. Usually, their opinion serves as the starting point in defining problems and setting goals of different strategies, guidelines and action plans.

Public availability of outcomes

The outcomes of the national-level consultation process through Youth Council is in the form of the minutes of the meetings (Zapisnici sa sednice Saveta za mlade). The minutes of the meeting are available on the website of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

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

Top-level or large-scale initiatives, outside of formal mechanisms of consultation or consultation through youth representative bodies, for participation of young people in dialogues with public authorities are not present in Serbia.

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 separate strategy particularly addressing youth participation.

However, as mentioned in previous section (see [5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making/Formal mechanisms of consultation](#)), the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 addresses the youth participation in one of its 9 strategic goals: **Active participation of young women and men in society.**

Scope and contents

The National Youth Strategy underlines that creating a legal and policy framework that encourages participation and activism of young people is possible only by development of various efficient mechanisms that will allow active participation of young people in public policies. These mechanisms must respond to the needs of young people.

The Strategy also emphasizes that involvement of young people in the development of youth policies, working groups, preparation of local strategic documents, making some decisions, are only some of the most efficient mechanisms that can increase their involvement in important social developments. In terms of that, the Strategy finds that different types of state programmes that include capacity building of youth organisations are probably the most important way to build the capacity of young people and increase their participation in society.

The specific goals of the Strategy, in terms of youth participation, are to improve legal and policy framework for youth participation, conditions for volunteering, capacity building and increasing participation in environmental protection and sustainable development.

Besides the listed goals, the Strategy specifies also the concrete activities that should be taken in order to achieve these goals. Furthermore, Action Plans for the implementation of the Strategy developed for period [2015-2017](#) and [2018-2020](#) are necessary for timely and quality realization of activities.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

The top-level government authority responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the National Youth Strategy is the Ministry of Youth and Sports. For more information about its responsibilities, implementation and monitoring of the Strategy and Action Plans, see Chapter 1/[1.3 National Youth Strategy/Responsible authority](#).

Revisions/updates

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 has not undergone any revisions/updates since its adoption, as can be found in Chapter 1/[1.3 National Youth Strategy/Revisions/updates](#).

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

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

The [Law on Youth](#) (Zakon o mladima) addresses the establishment of the youth associations, while the Law on Associations ([Zakon o udruženjima](#)) is governing the establishment and legal status of associations in general.

According to the Law on Associations, association is a voluntary, non-governmental and non-profit organization based on the freedom of association of individuals or bodies to corporate. These associations are established in order to pursue and promote a particular shared or general goal and interest.

The Law on Youth specifies that for the purposes of carrying out youth activities, improving conditions for personal and social development of young people and including young people in the social life of a community and their informing, associations of young people and associations for young people may be established.

Both the Law on Youth and the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 distinguishes the two types of associations that are recorded in the register of the Ministry of Youth and Sport and operating in accordance with the Law on Associations:

- **Youth organisation** is any association whose membership includes no less than two-thirds of young people and whose goals are aimed at young people, pursuant to the Law on Youth.
- **Organisation for youth** is any other association whose goals are focused, among other things, on young people, pursuant to the Law on Youth.

Public financial support

Youth organisations receive financial support through funding schemes dedicated for youth policy development and improvement.

Existing public funding sources:

- State budget (through public calls of line ministries)
- Budget of local self-governments (through local public calls)

Annually, the Government of the Republic of Serbia drafts a proposal of the Law on Budget for the next year. The National Assembly adopts the Law on Budget, together with the budget lines allocated for the youth sector and for the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Two budget lines in the [Law on Budget](#) 2019, Article 4 are allocated for the youth sector (1)

IPA 2014 – Youth Employability and Social Inclusion in the amount, (2) IPA 2014 – Lifelong Learning. These funds are allocated for the use of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Additionally, the budget line 481 - appropriations for non-governmental associations of the Law on Budget is intended in particular for organisations.

The Article 20 of the Law on Youth defines the types of activities that can be funded from the state budget. The funds for funding programmes and projects of public interest in the youth sector are dedicated for:

- providing conditions for the development and improvement of youth activities through encouraging young people to actively participate in social processes;
- encouraging associations of young people, associations for young people, and federations to participate in the implementation of youth activities and objectives from the National Youth Strategy;
- informing young people on issues of importance for the youth and issuing publications of importance for young people;
- stimulating career guidance and counselling for young people, and organizing trainings, seminars and events of importance for the employment, selfemployment and entrepreneurship of young people;
- fostering non-formal youth education within the youth sector and development of quality of non-formal youth education;
- social empowerment of young people, especially through encouraging volunteerism and youth work and capacity building of youth associations;
- encouraging young people to spend active and quality free time and foster healthy and safe lifestyles, as well as addressing the needs of young people in the field of culture;
- encouraging youth activities within the youth sector at the local level through the support of implementation of local plans of action for young people, as well as programmes and projects of local youth offices;
- conducting research on the position and needs of young people in the Republic of Serbia;
- implementation and promotion of international cooperation within the youth sector;
- support of young talents through rewards, scholarships, and skills improvement of pupils and university students.

Furthermore, Article 21 of the Law on Youth specifies that funding or co-funding of programmes and projects should be implemented by programme and project holders, including, in particular, associations of young people, associations for young people and federations.

For the purposes of providing conditions for active involvement of young people in the life, the social community and youth projects, the Law on Youth defines the establishment of Youth Offices. The Youth Offices are mainly funded from the budget of the local self-government units.

Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

The initiatives to increase the diversity of participants are mentioned in the Chapter 4 – Social Inclusion. The programme “Local Initiatives for Increasing Social Inclusion and Reducing Poverty” ([Lokalne inicijative za povećanje socijalne uključenosti i smanjenje siromaštva](#)) aims to contribute to the social inclusion of vulnerable social groups (women, youth, the Roma, migrants, persons with disabilities), especially those living in rural and extremely poor areas, through the development of innovative approaches to social inclusion at the local level (see Chapter 4/4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people/Programmes for vulnerable young people).

Additionally, there are some initiatives/projects implemented by non-governmental organisations, National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS) aiming to increase the diversity of participants. For example, KOMS project "Live Stream" ([Uključivanje uživo](#)) aimed to encourage active participation of young people from the municipalities with lower participation of youth. In 2019, KOMS implemented the project „Be Active – Initiate Changes" ([Budi aktivan - pokreni promene](#)) with the goal to encourage their participation in decision-making process.

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

Policy framework

A specific national strategy for social and civic competences does not exist in Serbia.

However, Serbia introduced important measures in the years before the adoption of the Paris Declaration ('Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education').

The framework for social and civic competences in Serbia is the Law on Fundamentals of Education System ([Zakon o osnovama obrazovanja i vaspitanja](#)). The Law stipulates that education system must ensure, among other, lifelong learning that aims to continuously develop personal, social, civic and working competences. It also underlines that those are some of the key competences of the lifelong learning. Furthermore, the Law defines social and civic competences as the ability to effectively and constructively participate in social and working life and to engage in active and democratic participation.

Specific target groups are not defined by this law.

Formal learning

Serbia offers separate subjects in citizenship education throughout the whole general education pathway – both in elementary schools and high schools. The subject of citizenship education is in the form of core curriculum options as an alternative to religious education. Approximately, 50% of pupils in elementary and high school opt for citizenship education.

In Serbia curriculum guidelines for civic education are delivered in terms of general aims, but not in terms of learning outcomes.

Some of the main learning objectives of civic education are:

- interacting effectively and constructively with others, especially being flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances and having 'emotional awareness',
- thinking critically and being creative,
- acting in a socially responsible manner and having 'a sense of belonging'.

Taught time is 45 minutes per week.

Non-formal and informal learning

Non-formal and informal learning are legally regulated by the [Law on the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Serbia \(NQF\)](#). In addition, the Law on Youth states that activities for informing young people on issues of importance, as well as on fostering non-formal youth education within the youth sector and development of quality of non-formal youth education should be funded from the state budget.

There are no official national programmes to support extra-curricular activities. However, schools are free to implement projects with different partners that encourage learning and the application of human rights activism in and out of school.

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

The Law on Fundamentals of Education System ([Zakon o osnovama obrazovanja i vaspitanja](#)) stipulates the right of students to establish Student's Parliament in last 2 grades of elementary school and in high-school. The Law does not bind schools to initiate establishment of Students' Parliament, but rather serve as the guidelines and encouragement for students to participate in decision-making in their educational institution.

Large-scale programmes aimed at training school staff to enhance their skills to participate in decision-making structures are mainly being organized by the Institute for the Improvement of Education ([Zavod za unapređivanje obrazovanja i vaspitanja](#)). The Institute annually conducts seminars throughout Serbia. In the period 2016-2018, some of the seminars related to enhancing teachers' skills to support pupils in participation in social life are following:

- Providing Support to the Development of Critical Thinking ([Podrška razvoju kritičkog mišljenja](#)). The aim of this training was creating an integrated approach to learning that encourages the development of critical thinking.
- Developing Student Activism and Volunteerism ([Razvijanje aktivizma i volonterizma kod učenika](#)). The seminar's goal was to increase the level of teacher's competences to create a positive social climate in the school and support student activism and volunteerism in various ways.
- Where Has Gone the Responsibility? Responsibility as the Main Factor in Successful Student Participation ([Gde je nestala odgovornost? – Odgovornost kao glavni factor uspešne participacije učenika](#)) The training aimed at improving the teacher's work in fostering the development of student responsibility as a pre-condition for successful student participation in school.

Measures to encourage student participation in the local community and wider society

Provisions forming part of national curricula or education regulations/guidelines encouraging pupils at upper secondary level to take part in activities serving the community outside school do not exist in Serbia.

However, Serbia has mechanisms in place enabling the active participation of young people in society, mainly through the work of Local Youth Councils, youth organisations and Youth Offices. All these actors, through the implementation of their regular activities, encourage young people/pupils to participate in activities outside of formal education. The participation in these activities enable pupils to improve their skills and competences, as well as to participate in citizenship-related activities/projects that improve their community. Main organisations active in the field of youth participation (see 5.3 Youth Representation Bodies/Other bodies) are the National Council of Serbia (KOMS), National Association of Youth Offices, National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (NAPOR). Furthermore, important role is given to 137 Local Youth Offices, approximately 80 Local Youth Councils, as well as Youth Council that enables young people to participate in the local community and wider society through different projects/programmes implemented on local or national level.

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

The legal framework for partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers does not exist in Serbia.

Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning

Top-level system of quality assurance applied to non-formal learning activities does not exist in Serbia.

Educators' support

All subject teachers may teach citizenship education, provided they have completed designated professional training in this area. More precisely, top-level education authorities organise continuing professional development (CPD) activities to develop the competences of all teachers in the area of citizenship education. In terms of that, any fully qualified teacher can teach citizenship education provided that they have completed one or more designated CPD courses. These CPD courses are specifically aligned with the citizenship education topics in the curriculum and are supported by the top-level education authorities.

Serbia does not have any sources of general online guidance recommended by education authorities.

Formal events or networks aiming to support citizenship education do not exist, however, separate events organized by different institutions, civil society associations take place on different occasions.

5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

Information providers / counselling structures

Public body responsible for disseminating information about democratic rights and democratic values in general is the Office for Human and Minority Rights ([Kancelarija za ljudska i manjinska prava](#)). Additionally, the Ministry of Youth and Sport is the authority responsible for monitoring of Local Youth Offices. One of the main activities of the Local Youth Offices is informing the youth about important topics. Local Youth Offices organize workshops, debates, seminars and other types of events aiming to involve youth and inform them about different topics.

Important contribution to the promotion of democratic rights and values make non-governmental, civil society organisations, as well.

As already mentioned in section [5.3 Youth Representation Bodies](#), the National Youth Council (Krovna organizacija mladih Srbije, KOMS) as the biggest youth organization in Serbia, conducts numerous activities to promote human and democratic rights, inform youth and involve them in different projects and processes. Furthermore, KOMS participates in EU Youth Dialogue representing Serbian youth and their vision at the European level.

Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

Large-scale, youth-targeted information campaign aiming to promote tolerance and reduce violence in schools has been active since 2005.

More precisely, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development implements numerous activities and campaigns against violence in schools and among peers. Umbrella programme for these activities is the programme "School without Violence" ("[Škola bez nasilja](#)"). The programme aims to prevent and reduce violence in schools, with the ultimate goal to support the development of the enabling and stimulating school environment and the safe surroundings for students. The programme has begun in 2005. and still remains active.

Another important initiative is the project "Stop Digital Violence" ("Zaustavimo digitalno nasilje") of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. Within this project, following activities are being conducted: promotional campaigns, educational trainings and conferences, development of manuals, etc. All these activities target students and pupils active on the internet. One of the important outputs of the project is the manual "Digital Violence – Prevention and Response" (priručnik "[Digitalno nasilje – prevencija i reagovanje](#)").

Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

As already mentioned, the National Youth Council of Serbia ([Krovna organizacija mladih Srbije](#), KOMS) is the biggest representative youth body in Serbia gathering over 100 youth and for youth organisations. One of its main roles is enabling and encouraging youth dialog. The Ministry of Youth and Sports recognizes the role that KOMS has in Serbian and Regional society and supports different KOMS initiatives.

The most important KOMS initiative related to youth dialogue is the development, promotion and maintenance of the digital platform Structural Dialog ([Strukturirani dijalog](#)). This platform is the cornerstone for establishment of structural dialog among youth. On the platform young people can make comments on different initiatives of public authorities, on youth policies, or provide their opinion that will be included in public hearings on different subjects. The idea behind the platform is to enable that the recommendations and opinions of young people find their place in local, national and even European policies.

Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

There are no policy frameworks or guidelines for youth-tailored communication that public institutions should follow in order to enhance the transparency of their policies and decision-making procedures.

There is no large-scale programme training policymakers in communicating with the youth.

5.9 E-participation

There are no programmes encouraging young people's electronic participation.

However, youth e-participation in structural dialog is encouraged and promoted through online platform platform Structural Dialog ([Strukturirani dijalog](#)) (see section [5.8 Raising political awareness among young people/Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people](#)).

5.10 Current debates and reforms

The Ministry of Youth and Sport in March 2019 published a call for funding and co-funding of programmes and projects for implementation of the National Youth Strategy and Youth Rules Programme ([Javni konkurs za finansiranje i sufinansiranje programa i projekata za sprovođenje ciljeva Nacionalne strategije za mlade i programa „Mladi su zakon”](#)). Financial support is intended for projects and programmes that support youth education, safety, health and participation. Total amount available for 2019 is RSD 68 million.

Furthermore, Serbia participates in the EU Youth Dialogue where young people, youth organisations, policy and decision makers, experts, researchers and other relevant civil society actors discuss and consult on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the field of youth. Representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the National Youth Council participated in the 7th cycle of the EU youth dialogue which took place in Romania in March 2019.

GLOSSARY

Action Plan is the plan for the implementation of National Youth Strategy for the certain period of time.

Fund for Young Talents annually provides scholarships and rewards for over 3,300 students and is under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Local Action Plan for Youth is a strategic municipal/city document that defines priority areas for youth and activities that respond to the specific needs of youth in the given environment.

The National Association of Youth Work Practitioners ([Nacionalna asocijacija praktičara/ki omladinskog rada, NAPOR](#)) is a vocational association of youth organisations whose mission is to create and develop conditions for quality assurance and recognition of youth work with the aim of developing potential of youth and youth workers, who contribute to welfare of community and society.

The National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS) is the highest representative body of the young population.

Vojvodina Youth Centre is intended for civil society organisations, institutions, sports organizations, local self-governments and institutions dealing with youth.

Young Person is the person aged between 15 and 30, according to the Law on Youth.

Youth Agenda is an operational planning document for working with and for young people within the ministries, institutions and organisations, developed on the basis of the National Youth Strategy and its Action Plan, aligned with the mandate, role and type of support provided to young people.

Youth office is a unit of the city/municipal government responsible for coordination of local youth policies in all areas relevant to young people, and in accordance with the specific needs of their local communities.

Youth Council, is an advisory body, established by the Government, which promotes and coordinates the activities related to the development, realisation and implementation of youth policy, and proposes measures for its improvement. Its main goal is to establish cooperation between different stakeholders – line ministries, different public authorities, institutions, youth and civil society sector.

Youth Policy actors are: the Republic of Serbia, autonomous province, and local self-government unit as holders of Youth Policy, institutions, association carrying out youth activities, and other actors participating in the implementation of the Youth Policy;

Youth Policy includes all measures and activities of government bodies, institutions, associations and other actors directed at the improvement and promotion of the position and status of young people.

Youth Worker is a professional working in civil society organizations/institutions /local self-government units, who conducts activities of youth work, and whose competences are defined by occupational standards in the field of youth work. Competencies can be acquired through formal, non-formal and informal education and learning. Since January 2019, youth worker has been officially registered as occupation in the National Employment Service's Record.

Labour youth actions (Omladinske radne akcije, ORA) were a unique social phenomenon developed in the former socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. They were an important tool for building public infrastructure (e.g. railways, public buildings, roads, industrial infrastructure, etc.).

Resource Centers - The Ministry of Youth and Sports selects experienced organisations/associations from all parts of the Republic of Serbia which provide expert

and technical support to youth volunteering projects funded by the Youth Rules programme.

Volunteering in Serbia represents an organized and voluntary provision of services for the general good and good of other persons, without any compensation or other material gain.

The organizer of volunteering is obliged to ensure that the performance of volunteer services and activities is carried out in such a way as to protect the personal integrity and interest of the volunteering users.

The organiser of volunteering can be a legal entity whose basic aim, in accordance with the founding act, is not the acquisition of profit. It is obliged to ensure that the performance of volunteering services and activities is carried out in such a way as to protect the personal integrity and interest of the volunteering users. The organizer of the volunteering is obliged to insure volunteers in the event of an injury at work and professional illness - in the case of long-term volunteering and in other cases when the insurance is contracted.

Youth Rules ([Mladi su zakon](#)) is the national-wide programme of the Ministry of Youth and Sport that promotes youth activism and volunteerism. The programme also supports young people who want to create and establish a better living conditions in their local communities.

Sector Skills Council – a new type of public body to be established aiming to initiate dialogue between employers' and workers' representatives and education authorities.

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) provides a comprehensive framework for organising education programmes and qualification by applying uniform and internationally agreed definitions to facilitate comparisons of education systems across countries