



Youth Wiki national description

Youth policies in Serbia

2021

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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.

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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*),
- Committee on Youth and Sports of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia,
- the media,
- 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.

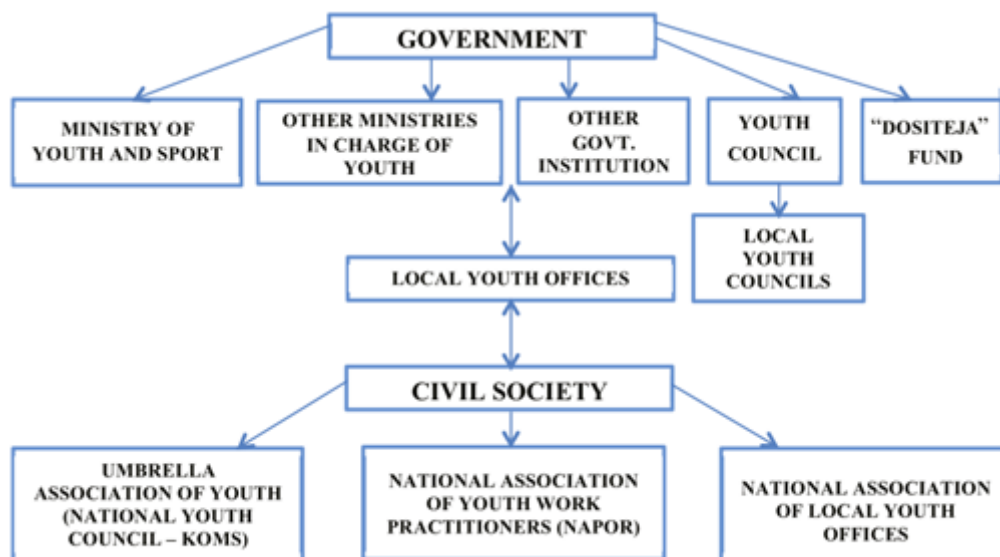


Figure 1.4.1.: Institutional framework of national youth policy. Source: [the Report of the Council of Europe on Youth Policy in Serbia](#), 2016.

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.

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

The [Youth Sector](#) within the Ministry of Youth and Sport 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 an important role in youth policy development in Serbia.

[National Youth Council of Serbia - KOMS](#) is the umbrella association of 104 youth organizations and it 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 the potential of youth and youth workers, who contribute to the welfare of the 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. The 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 young population aged between 15 and 30 but it also includes vulnerable social groups of young people, especially young people from the NEET group and young migrants. Furthermore, the priority area of a Youth Mobility strategic goal is directly aiming to support young migrants. The first planned step was to support projects aimed at collecting data about irregular youth migration. Next, the 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 of Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship with its strategic goal of **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 ensure 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 the NEET group.

The National Agency for Youth

The [Law on Youth](#) states that an agency for youth may be established for the purposes of implementing youth programmes, in accordance with the European Union youth programmes. A distinct national agency dedicated only to youth programmes has not been formed yet. However, the [Foundation Tempus](#) is the National Erasmus+ agency in RS responsible for the implementation of both the education and youth components of the Erasmus+ Programme.

Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

The Ministry of Youth and Sport is in charge of monitoring and evaluating 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.

The evaluation of the previous Strategy for the period 2009-2015 has been conducted as well as an evaluation of the Strategy 2015-2025 for the period 2015-2017, followed by the evaluation for the period 2015-2020. 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 publishes an analysis on youth-related subjects such as youth employment, health, activism, etc., among them [Survey on position and needs of youth in the Republic of Serbia](#) that has been conducted annually since 2010. The annual survey mentioned above aims to evaluate the current situation in the areas of strategic interest for young adults as defined in the National Youth Strategy and according to the Eurostat youth policy indicators.

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 Funding 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. In the [Law on Budget 2021](#), Article 4 one budget line is allocated for the youth sector: IPA 2014 – Youth Employability and Social Inclusion. 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 [Bylaw 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 Bylaw 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 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 is 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, a budget line in [the Law on Budget 2021](#) (Article 4) is allocated for the youth sector: IPA 2014 – Youth Employability and Social Inclusion in the amount of RSD 4,275 million covered by the state budget, and RSD 30,105 million covered by EU funds. These funds are allocated to 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

The Republic of Serbia became a full member country of the Erasmus + program in 2019, before that, from 2016 to 2019 Serbia only had access to some parts of the programme.

In the period 2016-2020 Serbian organisations participated in 16 Key Action 1 Mobility Projects for Young People and Youth Workers. Through these projects total grant of 240 147 EUR was deployed among 124 contracted organisations to support 399 participants.

Ten Strategic partnerships projects were funded, in total with EUR 395 000. These projects were an opportunity for 30 organisations to cooperate (Figure 1.7.1).



Figure 1.7.1: Organisation participation in KA2 projects by role

Source: Erasmus + Dashboard

In addition to decentralized actions, by the end of 2020 Serbian organisations participated in 120 Key Action 2 Capacity building projects in the Field of Youth, with a total value of over EUR 7,8 million.

In the period 2019-2021 since RS has become a program country, organisations from Serbia coordinated 59 projects with a total value of over EUR 2,3 million in the field of youth. In addition, youth organisations were partners in 923 projects worth a total of over EUR 27,9 million.

Evaluations of the youth-related initiatives/activities/programmes receiving EU funds have not been done so far and the trends in the amount or in the type of activities supported through EU funds are not being monitored, apart from the activities that are done for all Erasmus participating countries.

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

Forthcoming policy developments

Draft Amendments to the Law on Youth

The Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia announced the drafting of Amendments to the Law on Youth in June 2021. A working group was formed to ensure the representation of all relevant subjects of youth policy and prepare the draft by March 15, 2022.

The main objectives and targets to which Amendments to the Law should apply are:

- Improving the system of selection and financing of programmes and projects of public interest in the field of youth sector;
- Improving the coordination of youth policy stakeholders in conducting youth policy and monitoring the state in the field;
- Improving the national register of youth associations and unions.

The Ministry launched a broad consultative process regarding the draft, by having organized roundtables in 6 cities in Serbia by September 2021 that included representatives of the youth sector. The Ministry also provided an opportunity for young people to submit comments, suggestions and questions electronically and announced future public hearings on the subject.

The revision of the National Youth Strategy

In parallel with the process of amending the Law on Youth described above, the Ministry of Youth and Sport launched an initiative for revision of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 or the development of a new Strategy with the main objectives to:

- Synchronize with other strategic documents and acts of public policy at national and international levels;
- Adjust goals and objectives of the Strategy according to [The effect analysis of its application](#) so far, [The research on the position and needs of young people](#) and the recognized need to address the field of youth work more thoroughly in the Strategy;
- Improving implementation and its monitoring, as well as evaluating and reporting on the effects of the Strategy.

Subsequently, the Draft Youth Strategy 2022-2030 was published in February 2020 along with a call for comments from the interested public as part of the broad consultations.

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 Young Researchers 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.

In December 2021, a public debate on [the Draft of the new Law on Volunteering](#) started. The rationale for this Draft Law states that there is a need to synchronise the Law on Volunteering with the objectives of the National Youth strategy (see Chapter 2/[2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering](#)). The same document states that the low involvement of citizens in volunteering activities is partly due to shortcomings in regulations and public policies in the field, which the new Law will strive to improve. Some of them are administrative difficulties to organise volunteering, vaguely defined legal categories of volunteering (short-term, long-term and ad hoc), insufficient monitoring in the field of volunteer work, difficulties to mobilise volunteers in emergency situations due to the ban on volunteering in conditions that are dangerous or life-threatening, vaguely defined conditions for engaging vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, the elderly, children under 15) in volunteer work, insufficient recognition of innovative ways of volunteering (e.g. online volunteering, expert volunteering) and inadequate social acknowledgement of volunteer work. The next steps in the process of establishing the new Law are expected in the forthcoming period.

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.

One evidence-based evaluation of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy have been conducted. The [evaluation](#) was for the implementation period 2015-2017.

Within the specific goal 3 "Improved conditions for volunteering among young people and for young people", three results were expected in which most of the planned activities were realized. Other activities to encourage educational, cultural and sports institutions to recognize, support and evaluate youth volunteering, then support volunteering programmes in emergency situations as well as the development of gender-sensitive criteria for reporting and measuring the effects of volunteering have not been fully implemented.

Expected result	Activity	Percentage of completion
Conducive environment and support for the development of voluntary activities and youth volunteering	Supporting voluntary activities of youth activity associations, youth offices and informal youth groups	70%
	Supporting involvement of young volunteers in short-term and long-term volunteer programmes;	90%
	Encouraging educational, cultural and sports institutions to recognise, support and value youth volunteering	0%
	Establishing a system for the identification and recognition of skills acquired through volunteering for the purpose of employment and monitor its effectiveness	80%
	Encouraging intergenerational cooperation and inclusion of vulnerable young people through volunteer programmes, projects and initiatives	60%
	Supporting programmes for volunteering in case of emergency.	0%
Youth volunteering is <u>recognised</u> and its development is supported	Supporting the formulation of volunteering policy at the national level, improvement of legal framework for volunteering and development of volunteer work standards	90%
	Developing gender-sensitive criteria for reporting and measuring the effects of volunteering	0%
Empowered youth activity associations and youth offices to implement volunteering programmes and projects	Ensuring the application of volunteer work standards in the activities of youth activity associations and youth offices	20%
	Supporting the development and work of volunteer services within youth activity associations and youth offices	50%

Source: *Youth National Strategy Action Plan Evaluation 2015-2017*

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. The programme covers youth volunteer projects, large volunteer actions, national and international volunteer workcamps in Serbia.

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 the beginning of the programme, more than 1800 youth volunteer projects have been financed and implemented by youth associations and informal youth groups. These have contributed to arranging premises for the youth in local communities, undertaking environmental actions, fostering humanitarianism and solidarity, understanding, tolerance, security, intergenerational cooperation and entrepreneurship of young people. These projects have shown that young people recognise issues in their communities, that they want to be involved and help in resolving them.

In addition, 30 youth work-actions have been organized, and over 2.000 volunteers from more than 27 countries and more than 1600 young people from Serbia have donated more than 200.600 volunteer hours in 217 international volunteer camps since 2014 with the support of Young Researchers of Serbia.

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

Additionally, an online volunteer platform - volonterinamrezi.rs (volunteers online) launched under the working plan of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and has been managed by UNICEF Serbia in cooperation with the Young Researchers of Serbia. It started in 2020 in response to the crisis caused by the Coronavirus pandemic and it has continued to connect young people across the country with organisations, institutions, sports associations and local self-governments, providing both online and offline volunteering opportunities.

Funding

Within the "Youth Rules" program, the call for the financing of youth volunteer projects is published annually. During 2019 and 2020, 300 projects, in which 5.000 volunteers from all over Serbia took part were supported. Through the call for 2021, 135 youth volunteer projects throughout Serbia were planned to be supported in the amount of up to RSD 42.000 per project, and a total of up to RSD 5,67 million.

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 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 training 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 registry 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 also involved in youth volunteer activities monitoring. It conducts surveys and annual research on the position and needs of young people, together with the research on the implementation of the National Youth Strategy ([Report on the implementation of the National Youth Strategy in the Republic of Serbia 2015-2020](#)). These surveys and reports are not targeted only/directly at the youth volunteering activities, but they cover relevant questions for monitoring and measures development. According to the [Research on the position and needs of young people in Serbia 2020](#), most young people - 89% are not familiar with the Youth Rules programme; 69% of young people stated that they hadn't participated in any volunteer activities so far, while one-third of the respondents who had volunteered, stated that they had received written confirmation of their volunteer work.

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

- volunteer personal information,
- volunteering organiser information,
- a brief description of volunteering services and activities,

- a period of volunteering and
- information on preparatory training 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

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.

Since 2019, Serbia is also a member of the Eurodesk network, which among other things, helps young people learn about volunteering opportunities across Europe.

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.

Serbia also participates in the Regional Youth Volunteering Exchange programme [ROUTE WB6](#) that was initiated in 2019 by the [Regional Youth Cooperation Office](#) - an independently functioning institutional mechanism, founded by the Western Balkans 6 participants (WB 6) aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region through youth exchange programmes.

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).

The visa-free entry to the Republic of Serbia applies to holders of foreign national passports having a valid Schengen, UK and other Member States' visa, or visa of the United States of America, and for holders of foreign national passports having residence permit in the countries of the Schengen area, EU, or the United States of America. The above-mentioned categories of foreign nationals may, without prior visa application, enter, transit and stay in the Republic of Serbia for up to 90 days during a six-month period. The details of the visa regime can be found on the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia official website](#).

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

As stated in the research [Youth and Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Serbia](#), in recent years small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs have become carriers of economic growth in Serbia. In general, Serbian economy is showing certain advancement on the world lists of competitiveness, innovation, business development and the like. Thus, Serbia has advanced by four places on the World Bank's 2020 list - "Doing Business List" and is now ranked 44th out of 190 countries.

Nevertheless, the economy of the Republic of Serbia is still characterized by a low level of innovation. According to innovation performance, Serbia is classified in the group of countries of moderate innovators and it lags behind the EU average (0.504) and most European countries. In the latest report, the Global Innovation Index for 2019, Serbia fell by two places and is on the 57th place out of 129 countries (Ibidem).

The total number of employees in 2020 was 2,215,475, which is an increase of 1.9% compared to 2019. There were 384,972 entrepreneurs and employees in legal entities, as well as self-employed persons, which is an increase of 2% compared to the previous year ([Registered Employment, annual average 2020, Statistical release by Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia](#)).

When it comes to the unemployment rate, it was steadily declining in the past years from 18.9% (2015) to 9.7% (2020). However, in the first quarter of 2021 this rate increased to 12.8%, followed by a decline to 10.5% by the third quarter of the same year, according to the data provided by the National Bank of Serbia (Narodna banka Srbije) in the document [Macroeconomic Developments in Serbia](#). According to the annual labour force surveys, the unemployment rates for the period 2015-2020 are as follows:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Unemployment rate in %	18.9	16.4	14.5	13.7	11.2	9.7

Source: [Macroeconomic Developments of Serbia](#)

Although general unemployment has been falling, it is still very high among young people (at the level of one fifth). According to the [Labour Force Survey 2020](#), the contingent of young people, aged 15 to 24, continued to decrease in 2020 by 1.5% compared to 2019. The number of active young people in 2020 was reduced compared to the previous year as well as the employment rate of the young aged 15 to 24, as shown in the table below. The NEET rate (representing the share of young people who neither worked nor studied in the total population of the young aged 15-24) amounted to 15.9% in 2020, and it was higher by 0.6 p.p. compared to the previous year.

Young population aged 15-24	2020 (%)	2019 (%)	Changes in relation to the previous year (%)
Rate of unemployment	26.6	27.5	-0.8
Rate of employment	20.8	21.5	-0.7

Rate of inactivity	71.7	70.4	1.3
Rate of activity	28.3	29.6	1.3

Source: *Labour Force Survey, 2020*

According to data on youth unemployment from September 2019 presented in [Youth and Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Serbia](#), the number of unemployed youth in Serbia is 102,895, which represents 20.5% of the total number of unemployed. Practically, one fifth of the total unemployed in the Republic of Serbia are young people aged 15 to 30.

Figures in the table below show that even if the position of young people in the labour market has been improved compared to the previous period, young people in Serbia still face significant barriers in the labour market.

Labor market indicators for young people (15–29 years) from 2016 to 2018

	2016	2017	2018	+/-
Activity rate	47,2	47,6	48,1	0,9
Employment rate	33,1	34,9	36,3	3,2
Informal employment rate	26,3	21,9	20,9	-5,4
Unemployment rate	29,8	26,7	24,5	-5,3
NEET rate	22,3	21,7	20,1	-2,2

Source: *National Employment Action Plan for 2020 in Youth and Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Serbia*

When it comes to self-employment, young people in Serbia rarely choose it their first choice. In this respect, young people in Serbia do not differ much from their peers in the EU. According to available research by the International Labour Organization, there are different reasons why young people choose self-employment:

Reasons for self-employment

Reason	Total (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)
They could not find a paid job	51,3	49,2	58,2
Greater independence	23,4	23,7	22,1
More flexible working hours	4,4	4,0	5,7
Higher income level	11,0	12,4	6,2
Their family demanded it of them	1,5	2,0	0
Other	8,4	8,6	7,8

Source: *Transition of young women and men in the labor market of the Republic of Serbia in Youth and Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Serbia*

As it can be seen young people opt for self-employment only after a certain period of inability to find a paid job. In terms of business challenges, young entrepreneurs believe that by far the biggest challenge is the issue of insufficient financial resources, followed by competition in the market and legal regulations, however with a significantly lower frequency of responses.

The same research (Transition of young women and men in the labour market of the Republic of Serbia in [Youth and Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Serbia](#)), showed that most young entrepreneurs received money to start their own business from family or friends (51,4%) and only 1,2% took a loan from a bank or from a state institution (4,5%).

The survey done in 2016 by the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, the Youth Commerce Forum and the Serbian Development Agency ([Youth and Entrepreneurship in the Republic](#)

of Serbia) focused on the needs of potential and existing young entrepreneurs in Serbia. According to this survey, young entrepreneurs consider placement and the market to be the biggest business problems (30%) collection of receivables (22%), the attitude that state institutions do not provide real support (20%), and the fear of being punished by the Tax Administration for regulations to which they are not referred (19%).

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 [Employment Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2021-2026](#) - aims to improve the labour market position of youth by ensuring cooperation between multiple sectors, introducing and formalising traineeships, preventing further misuse of non-labour contract modalities, supporting youth entrepreneurship through specialised entrepreneurship training programmes and mentoring support as well as the availability of different sources of financial support. On top of that, according to the Strategy, efforts will be made to introduce The Youth Guarantee scheme in RS.
- The [Strategy of Scientific and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia 2021-2025](#) - named "The Power of Knowledge" with the goals to strengthen the link between science, industry and society to encourage innovation. The strategy also envisions greater investment in individuals, especially young scientists.
- The [Strategy for Education Development in Serbia by 2030](#) - with one of the priorities to introduce youth entrepreneurship in education and training programmes, etc.
- The [Strategy for the Development of the Start-up Ecosystem of the Republic of Serbia 2021-2025](#) - with one of the goals to raise start-up entrepreneurial capacities through programs in secondary and high education which is aimed at youth, and it's expected to result in more student start-ups.

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".

The National Employment service can finance up to 12 months of vocational training through the [Vocational Training Program](#). During the internship program, the National Employment Service:

- pays different amount of funds to the engaged persons in the name of financial assistance and transportation costs, depending on the level of qualification;
- calculates and pays contributions in case of injuries at work and work related diseases, in accordance with the law.

The funds are not paid to the employer but to the unemployed engaged through the program.

[Trainee program](#) is another National Employment service program intended:

- for unemployed persons with a high level of qualification;
- for unemployed persons with a secondary school qualification (both vocational and general).

For unemployed persons with a high level of qualification, the program is realized at a private sector - employer premises and the National Service participates in financing the program for up to 12 months. An unemployed person must have at least ISCED 6 level of qualification and an average grade of at least 8.5 at previously completed levels of study, up to 30 years of age and have no work experience in the profession for which the qualification was acquired.

For unemployed persons with a secondary school qualification, the program is realized at a private sector - employer premises and the National Service participates in financing the program for up to 6 months. Unemployed persons must belong to one of the following categories of persons: young people up to 30 years of age who have been registered as unemployed for more than 6 months, unemployed persons with disabilities, unemployed Roma, young people who had or have the status of young people in foster care, foster families and foster care families.

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.

A working group for traineeships was formed to make proposals for changes in the existing or adoption of new regulations in this area and the Draft Law on Traineeships ([Nacrt zakona o radnoj praksi](#)) has been publicly debated since August 2021 (see Chapter 3/[3.11 Current debates and reforms](#)).

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.

The programme “Improving the Employability of Youth through Traineeships” has been implemented by UNICEF Serbia, in cooperation with the National Employment Service, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs and other partners, since November 2021. The programme includes training of young people through an online learning platform in order to adapt to the work environment and acquire skills necessary for career development, and the realization of traineeship in a work environment that includes employers from public, private and civil sectors. The [I Choose Success](#) online platform, which connects potential trainees to companies and organizations that provide traineeships has been developed for the purpose of the programme.

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 occupation** in the [National Qualifications Framework](#) of the Republic of Serbia.

Funding

The main public body supporting apprenticeships and traineeships is the National Employment Service which implements active employment policy measures that include

the Programme for traineeships. It implements its annual programmes on the basis of the National Employment Action Plan, which is adopted periodically by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. According to the National Action Plan for Employment for the period from 2021 to 2023 ([Akcioni plan za period od 2021. do 2023. godine za sprovođenje Strategije zapošljavanja u Republici Srbiji za period od 2021. do 2026. godine](#)) funds are provided as follows:

- Active employment policy programmes and measures in the amount of 5,200,000,000.00 RSD for 2021 and projections of funds in the amount of 5,500,000,000.00 RSD for 2022 and 6,000,000,000.00 RSD for 2023;
- Active employment policy programmes and measures from local governments - municipalities in the amount 900,000,000.00 RSD and projections of funds in the same amount for 2022 and 2023;
- Employment Programme Support National Employment Service (IPA 2013) in the amount of 52,796,000.00 RSD for 2021.

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

Different youth employment policies in Serbia focus on several key measures:

- Public youth employment services (such as National Employment Service);
- trainings for young people;
- encouraging the employment of young people through tax relief;
- direct creation of new jobs for young people;
- active labour market measures for young people;
- active labour market measures for persons with disabilities.

These policies, as further grouped in the research findings [Youth and Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Serbia](#), can be divided into three major categories:

1. active measures and programs on the labour market aimed at improving the labour supply (additional education and training for young people);
2. measures to stimulate labour demand (stimulating employment, subsidies, etc.);
3. measures aimed at improving the functionality of the labour market (information, career guidance, entrepreneurial counseling, business guidance, business plans, etc.).

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.

Another relevant strategy, the [Strategy to support the development of small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurship and competitiveness for the period 2015 to 2020](#) dedicates one of the strategic goals to “development and promotion of entrepreneurial spirit and encouragement of female entrepreneurship, youth and social entrepreneurship. Related specific goals are:

- Improving statistical monitoring and research of female, youth and social entrepreneurship;
- Policy and instruments to support female, youth and social entrepreneurship.

In terms of policies and support instruments, the Strategy envisages different measures:

- inclusion of support for female youth and social entrepreneurship in all government documents that have an impact on the economy;
- increasing the participation of women, youth and social enterprises in various SME support programmes;
- introducing special support programs for SMEs intended exclusively for women, youth and social entrepreneurship;
- promotion of entrepreneurial spirit, examples of good practice, networking, establishing dialogue.

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.

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.

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.

My First Salary is a program implemented by the National Employment Service with the aim to encourage youth employment and support the economy in solving the problem of staff shortages. The program is launched in August 2020 and should enable 10,000 young people to work independently on specific jobs. Conditions to participate in the program are:

- a person has either secondary or higher education,
- up to the age of 30,
- has no previous work experience.

Employers who are interested in participating in the Program are announcing specific job positions where young people will be trained to work independently according to an established program approved by the National Employment Service, with a mentor who supervises and supports the process.

Young people with completed secondary education are provided with a monthly financial compensation in the amount of RSD 20,000.00, while for those with completed higher education the compensation amounts to RSD 24,000.00. A total of two billion dinars from the budget of the Republic of Serbia has been allocated for the Program. The funds will be paid directly to the persons on training, through the National Employment Service. In addition to the amount paid by the state, employers can also pay additional funds.

In addition, the National Employment Service supports young job seekers through different **active job search trainings** and clubs for active job search.

Reinforcing the employability of young job-seekers is additionally supported by numerous career guidance and counselling 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.

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](#) 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 3.1/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 Mobility of Individuals](#)
2. [EU Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#)

Erasmus+ programme – Key Action 1 Mobility of Individuals is a part of the programme that supports:

- Mobility of learners: opportunities for pupils, students, trainees and young people to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country;
- Youth participation activities: youth-led local and transnational initiatives run by informal groups of young people and/or youth organisations to help young people engage and learn to participate in democratic life;
- DiscoverEU: action offering 18-year-olds an opportunity to have a short-term individual or group travel experience throughout Europe.

In terms of mobilities fostering employment, entrepreneurship and vocational opportunities, individuals participate in different parts of KA1. Young people participate in:

1. Mobility in the field of higher education, where students can either study abroad at a partner higher education institution or carry out a traineeship in an enterprise, a research institute, a laboratory, an organisation or any other relevant workplace abroad. Students can also combine a study period abroad with a traineeship, further enhancing the learning outcomes and developing transversal skills;
2. Mobility in the field of vocational education and training, where apprentices and students can go to VET providers and/or companies abroad;
3. Mobility in the field of school education, for pupils in primary and secondary education;
4. Learning mobility in the field of Youth that provide non-formal and informal learning opportunities for young people and youth workers enabling them to acquire essential competences that contribute to their personal and social and educational development and foster their active participation in society, thereby improving their employment prospects.

As regards pupils, students, trainees, apprentices and young people, mobility activities supported under Key Action 1 are meant to produce, among other things, enhanced employability and improved career prospects, increased sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, increased self-empowerment and self-esteem.

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 (SEECCEL), 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

Learning about entrepreneurship through different courses, programmes, projects financed by the state and/or different public institutions is organized and encouraged through the Decade of Entrepreneurship ([Decenija preduzetništva](#)). This set of measures provides a number of financial, nonfinancial and educational initiatives.

[Entrepreneurship Portal](#) is developed within the Decade of Entrepreneurship with the aim to be efficient service for the economy and to contribute to the affirmation and development of the entrepreneurial spirit in Serbia.

Initiatives specifically aimed at entrepreneurial skills are:

- [Start - up](#) - programme for encouraging entrepreneurship development through financial support for beginners in business
- [Development programme](#) - entrepreneurship promotion program through development projects
- [Different educational measures](#) – trainings, counselling, mentoring
- [Non-financial support for self-employment](#)
- Different investments measures.

[Competition for the best technological innovation](#) is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development in cooperation with the institution that meets the conditions set by the public call. The competition is intended to promote entrepreneurship in Serbia and develop awareness of the importance of innovation, modern technologies and organizational solutions. Entrepreneurs, small and medium enterprises, high tech companies, secondary schools and student teams can participate in the competition. The competition provides a chance for all individuals and legal entities,

secondary school and student teams to check and compare the quality of their business ideas in relation to others.

The main goal is to point out to the participants all the possibilities but also obstacles, as well as the work that needs to be done to bring an innovative idea to the market. These activities include organizing work teams, education, market research, preparation of business plans, work with modern IT tools and others.

The competition lasts the entire calendar year, with the obligation to follow the set of established rules, and it all ends at the end of December with a live broadcast on a national television.

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.

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](#)).

As part of the project "Our community, our future - greater cooperation and employment of young people", an [interactive platform neetmladi.info](#) dedicated to youth in the NEET situation was published. The project is focused on social innovation in the field of youth employability, emphasizing the cooperation of institutions and organizations to ensure sustainable solutions that in five cities in Serbia respond to the needs of young people in NEET status.

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:

- [Entrepreneurship Portal](#) gives an overview of three different programmes supporting start-ups, development and innovation, digitization and the green economy;
- [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:

- Program for encouraging entrepreneurship through financial support for women entrepreneurs and youth ([Program podsticanja razvoja preduzetništva kroz finansijsku podršku za žene i mlade](#))
- 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 ([Kredit 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.

Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs formed a working group to examine the possibility of improving the traineeships program in the Republic of Serbia, in August 2021. [Ex-ante analysis](#) was conducted and published in November 2021 to help formulate potential solutions for the legal framework of the implementation of traineeships. In December 2021, the Ministry initiated a public debate on the Draft Law on Traineeships ([Nacrt zakona o radnoj praksi](#)). Such Law is being introduced into the legal system of Serbia for the first time and it regulates issues such as the traineeship contract and its termination, the methods of gaining practical experience and appropriate skills through traineeships, the rights and obligations of an employer and a trainee, the certificate of traineeship and a traineeship plan. The rationale of the Draft Law states, among other things, that its adoption is expected to improve the indicators of the labour market for young people as well as reduce the NEET rate.

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) at risk of poverty, 19.5% (1.37 million people) 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.

According to the [Analytical overview of the status of youth in the European integration process](#) published by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2021, the at-risk-of-poverty rate is the highest in children and young people, standing at 23.6% for young people aged 18-24. The lack of financial opportunities causes further long-term dependence on parents and late acquisition of independence of young people, approx. 60% of young people who are still dependent on their parents report financial factors to be the reason. In terms of employment opportunities, young people are still in a worse position than the rest of the working-age population. The gender structure of youth unemployment indicates a worse position of women. Namely, 31% of young women and 25.8% of young men were unemployed in 2020. High youth unemployment rates and NEET rates, as well as the long period of time it takes to transit from education to employment, are identified in [The European Commission's 2021 Report on Serbia](#).

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.

The 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](#))

The 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, the Department for Human and Minority Rights in Education covers the fields of inclusive education and education of vulnerable groups. 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. The Draft of the Youth Strategy 2022-2030 was published in February 2022 and put up for public debate. More about the current Strategy can be found in Chapter 1/[1.3 National Youth Strategy](#), whereas more about the forthcoming changes can be found in 1/[1.9 Current debates and reforms](#).

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 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.

- The Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020-2024.
- The National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030.

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.

Two evidence-based evaluations of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy were conducted for the periods 2015-2017 and 2018-2020 (See [Chapter 1/1.3 National Youth Strategy/Responsible authority for the implementation of the youth strategy](#)). Additionally, the Report on the implementation of the NYS for the period 2015-2020 was published in 2021. According to the report, the implementation of measures and activities regarding social inclusion improved during 2019 and 2020 to a significant extent (See Table below). The results can be found in [Chapter 1/1.3 National Youth Strategy/Responsible authority for the implementation of the youth strategy](#).

PERCENTAGE OF COMPLETION	2015-2017	2018	2019	2020
STRATEGIC GOAL: Improved support to the social inclusion of young people from categories at risk of social exclusion	34%	24.8%	85.7%	88.33%
Systemic preconditions were created for young people at risk of social exclusion to be adequately identified and supported in their inclusion in economic, social and cultural flows	22%	88%	80%	83.33%
The availability and scope of prevention of social exclusion of young people at risk has increased	29%	11%	100%	95.37%
The inclusion of young people at the risk of social exclusion, which are beneficiaries of local services and support programmes has increased	51%	3.3%	82.5%	71.65%

Source: [the Report on the implementation of the NYS 2015-2020](#)

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.

Employment and Social Reform Programme – ESRP is a strategic process, structured according to the model of the [Strategy "Europe 2020"](#) applied by member states and which monitors the process of European integration as the main mechanism for dialogue on the priorities of the Republic of Serbia in the field of social policy and employment in the EU accession process.

The programme covers primarily the labour market and employment, human resources and skills, social inclusion and social protection, as well as challenges in the pension and health care systems. Special emphasis is put on youth employment, due to the high youth unemployment rate.

Thus, within the goal "Improving the position of young people in the labour market", specific measures necessary to reduce the number of young people who are not employed or in the education and training system (NEET) and to reduce youth unemployment are:

- Improve the legislative and institutional framework, as well as standards for internship programs in order to provide young people with their first work experience after leaving school;
- Improve the system of informing young people on possibilities in the fields of education, employment, youth entrepreneurship, European integration as well as in use of EU funds and other areas of partnership with youth civil society organizations (CSOs), all with support of the Youth Offices and the Fund for Young Talents;
- Promote lifelong learning and the development of programs for young people who have dropped out of school, i.e. for people without qualifications, which would include training in combination with a subsidy to the employer;
- Develop a concept of student work with a limited number of working hours per week;
- Further develop the system of early profiling of unemployed youth in the National Employment Service (NES);
- Develop innovative models and services to support youth employment at the local level through a broad partnership of local partners - educational institutions, the NES, business and civil society;
- Promote and further develop system of career guidance and counselling;
- Improve youth service packages.

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“](#)).

As financial support for the implementation of the [Employment and Social Reform Programme – ESRP](#), in addition to the national sources of financing within the republic budget, international sources of financing primarily through IPA funds is predicted. In addition, the participation of bilateral donors in the implementation of certain measures is also included.

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](#).

[Employment and Social Reform Programme – ESRP](#) predicts strict mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the implementation and effects of measures within the programme. Therefore, besides using existing mechanisms that function within the system of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, monitoring and reporting on the implementation and effects of ESRP measures financed through the pre-accession instrument (IPA II) will be implemented through a national monitoring system established on the principle of joint monitoring committees between the European Commission and the Republic of Serbia.

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.

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, gynecology, 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 use 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.

The Youth Council is a public body whose members are the representatives of:

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

Composition

Youth Council consists of 40 members as follows:

- president,
- nineteen representatives of state bodies,
- a representative of the province of Vojvodina administrative body,
- a representative of national minority councils,
- two representatives of youth offices,
- two experts and
- fifteen youth representatives.

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 held at least twice 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

The Youth Council is an 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, established by the Law on Higher Education and regulated by the Law on Student Organizing. 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 (UNSS) 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 110,000 school students and 196 student councils from 76 cities/municipalities.

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 47 youth organisations and organisations for youth. 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 the welfare of the community and society. Any organization active in the field of youth work registered in Serbia can be a member of NAPOR.

The main responsibilities of NAPOR 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 third strategic goal: **Youth activism and active participation.** .

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](#).

One evidence-based [evaluation](#) of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy have been conducted for the implementation period 2015-2017.

Summary assessment of the degree of fulfilment of the specific objectives regarding to social inclusion show that less than a half of the planned activities have been realized:

	Activity	Percentage of completion
Strategic goal	Improved active participation of young women and men in society	56%
Specific objective 1	The legal and policy framework for the inclusion of the young women and men perspective and the participation of young people in decision-making processes and development of youth policies has been improved	46%
Specific objective 2	Conditions have been established for capacity building and synergy in the work of youth policy actors and sustainable development and inclusion of a larger number of young associations that implement youth activities	57%
Specific objective 3	Improved conditions for volunteering among and for young people	60%
Specific objective 4	Increased participation of young people in environmental protection and sustainable development	62%

Source: [Youth National Strategy Action Plan Evaluation 2015-2017](#)

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. The Law defines social and civic competences as the ability to effectively and constructively participate in social and working life and to increase active and democratic participation. Furthermore, the Law establishes “responsible participation in a democratic society” as one of the eleven general interdisciplinary competencies, to be developed through all school subjects, throughout primary and secondary education.

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.

The [citizenship education online platform](#) was established by the [Institute for Improvement of Education](#) in cooperation with UNICEF. The platform is primarily intended for teachers of citizenship education in high schools but it is recommended to citizenship education teachers at all levels of education. It is designed to support teachers in the process of planning, teaching and learning and contains video and written resources (e.g., laws, regulations, strategies, research, manuals, guides, professional texts...) relevant to the curriculum and methodology of teaching citizenship education.

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](#)").

In order to prevent violence and discrimination in schools, the National Platform "I keep you safe" ("[Čuvam te](#)") was launched in March 2021 by The Government of the Republic

of Serbia. Since the partners on the project are several line ministries as well as civil society organisations, a particular goal of the project is coordination and strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation of all relevant institutions in the fight against violence. The platform integrates different aspects of prevention and tools to combat violence involving children and youth, such as informative and educational content as well as online service to report violence.

Starting 2019, in partnership with the Faculty of Political Sciences – University of Belgrade and with the support of Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, Westminster Foundation for Democracy has been conducting the [Popular Democracy project](#). It is a youth-based project aiming to inform and educate high school students (first-time voters) throughout the country on democracy, elections and civic activism.

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 [Dijalog.rs](#). This platform is the cornerstone for establishment of structured 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 The EU Youth Dialogue (previously the Structured Dialogue) is encouraged and promoted through online platform platform "[Dijalog.rs](#)" established by KOMS - National Youth Council of Serbia (see section [5.8 Raising political awareness among young people/Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people](#)). Through the same platform, KOMS implements the "Dialogue with institutions" programme wherein representatives of the national authorities (Prime Minister, Minister of Youth and Sport etc.) participate in dialogues with young people.

Additionally, UNICEF Serbia launched the "[U-Report](#)" platform in 2019 to engage young people in the decision-making process within their schools and communities and to influence services, policy, legislation on subnational, national, regional and global levels. The platform provides opportunities for young people to respond to polls on various topics, report issues and support children rights. The data and insights are intended to be shared back with communities and connected to policymakers who make decisions that affect young people.

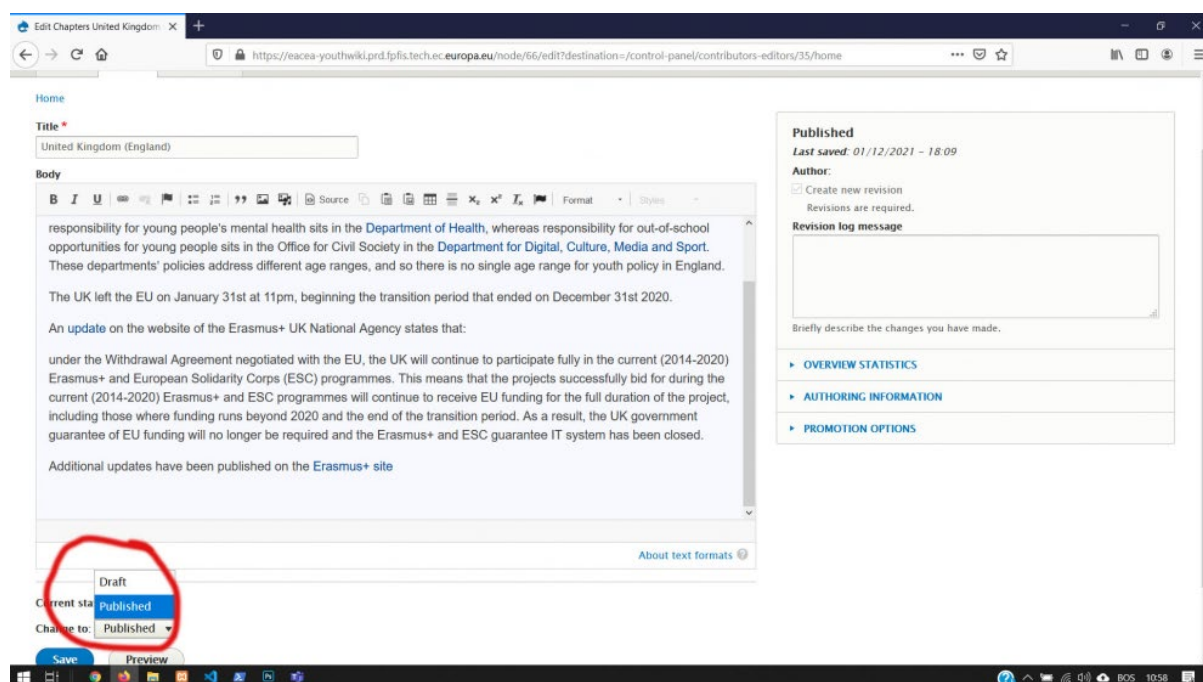
5.10 Current debates and reforms

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.

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Educational system in Serbia went through notable reforms in the past decades in opening up and enabling equal access to all ages and all pupils' categories. Special emphasis was put on individualisation of teaching, development of cross-curricular skills like career skills and entrepreneurship, media and digital literacy as well as on lifelong learning, employability, innovation, cross-border mobilities etc.



Even though the right to education is guaranteed for everyone by the [Constitution of the Republic of Serbia](#) reports show that the Roma are underrepresented at all education levels and that the number of NEETs is still high.

Non-formal education has also gained prominence especially with the adoption of the NQF Law, but the development and systematization of this field is still in its infancy and has yet to be developed so that all of its potential can be properly utilized.

6.1 General context

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

The right to education is guaranteed for everyone by Article 71 of the [Constitution of the Republic of Serbia](#). Even though secondary education is not compulsory, all young people have the right to enter upper secondary education upon completion of the compulsory primary education. In the school year 2019/20, 97.9% of pupils continued education after completing primary education. However, the generation coverage in upper secondary education was 87.4% because there was dropout of pupils after enrolment to upper secondary schools. The number of students in tertiary education decreased by 3,1% in the same school year. The coverage of generation attending faculties and higher education schools was 54.7% ([The Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Serbia 2021](#)).

In 2020, a total of 41,331 students graduated from all higher education institutions, which was about 1,000 less than in 2019. Out of the total number of graduate students, 39.9% were men and 60.1% were women. For the majority of young people aged 15-30 the highest level of education reached is a four-year high school education (41.4%), followed by those with incomplete primary and primary education (21.4%) and three years of high school education (14.8%), while 11.9% of young people completed basic academic studies. According to Labor Force Survey data, 5.6% of young people aged 18-24 dropped out of school early. The NEET rate among youth (young people who are not employed, are not in the process of education, nor are they in training) amounted to 15.9% in 2020 in the Republic of Serbia. NEET rate in the previous five-year period slightly decreased - from 17.7% in 2016 to 15.9% in 2020 ([Status of Vulnerable Groups in the Process of Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union - Status of Youth](#)).

Serbia participated in PISA assessment in 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2018. Students in Serbia scored lower than the OECD average in reading, mathematics and science in 2018 with a difference in points that corresponds to the effect of one and a half years of schooling in the OECD countries. However, mean performance in reading and mathematics has improved since the country first participated in PISA, while performance in science remained stable, on average. PISA 2022 research is to be conducted by the [Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation](#), as the national PISA centre ([Pisa 2018 Serbia Country Note](#)).

Different reports show that those least likely to attend or to complete secondary schools are the Roma. Compared with their peers, Roma is underrepresented at all education levels. According the [Regional Roma Survey 2017](#) the percentage of Roma aged 18-21 with complete compulsory education shows signs of progress and that the corresponding gap between Roma and non-Roma peers with complete compulsory education is decreasing. Despite significant improvements, over one-third of Roma of this age lacks a basic education. Upper secondary and tertiary completion rates continue to be very low. Only 14% of young Roma complete secondary school while only around 1% of young Roma continue to university level.

When it comes to non-formal education, [Adult Education Survey \(AES\)](#) performed in 2016 showed that that a 25-34-year-old woman with a university degree, employed and settled in the city, most often participate in lifelong education. The survey further shows that 23.7% of population aged 25-34 participated in some form of non-formal education.

Organisation of the education and training system

The educational system in Serbia consists of:

- [Early Childhood Education and Care](#),
- [Primary Education](#),
- [Secondary Education](#) and

- **Higher Education.**

Primary education and preparatory preschool programmes are mandatory and free, while secondary education is free but not mandatory. All citizens have access to higher education under equal conditions.

More details on the organisation of the education system and its structure can be found on Eurydice pages [2.3 Organisation of the Education System and of its Structure](#) and [Overview](#) where diagram of the system is presented.

The total duration of compulsory education in Serbia is 9 years. Children enter compulsory education at the age of 5½, when they start the pre-school preparatory programme (see Glossary), followed by 8 years of primary education. The leaving age in full-time compulsory education is 14½. Pupils are usually 15 years old when they enter secondary education and 18½ when they leave four-year programmes.

Secondary education (ISCED 3) consists of the following:

- four years of general education;
- two to four years of vocational education.

There are two types of general/grammar schools:

- general/grammar schools (gimnazija opšteg tipa);
- specialized general/grammar schools, intended for education of talented students in certain areas (specijalizovana gimnazija).

Children acquire secondary vocational education in vocational schools (srednja stručna škola) in 15 different areas.

Pupils who graduate from grammar schools can enrol at almost any faculty. Vocational school students can proceed to **higher education** at faculties and colleges fitting their specialisation. Students enrolled in three-year vocational education and training (VET) programmes can take additional exams to qualify for taking university entrance exams.

Higher education (ISCED levels 6,7 and 8) is divided into **three levels**:

- First level (Bachelor Studies);
- Second level (Master Studies, Specialized Studies);
- Third level (PhD Studies).

Serbia joined the Bologna Process in 2003. The adoption of the [Law on Higher Education](#) supporting the implementation of Bologna Process followed in 2005.

The higher education system in Serbia offers two types of studies:

- academic studies realised at universities;
- applied studies organized either at colleges of applied studies or at universities.

First level of studies includes:

1. Undergraduate Academic Studies (Bachelor) – lasting for 3-4 years, carrying 180 to 240 ECTS;
2. Bachelor Applied Studies – lasting for 3 years, carrying 180 ECTS.

Second level of studies includes:

1. Master Academic Studies – lasting for 1-2 years and carrying 60 to 120 ECTS;
2. Master Applied Studies – lasting for 2 years and carrying at least 120 ECTS for students who have previously achieved 180 ECTS;
3. Specialised Applied Studies – lasting for 1 year and carrying 60 ECTS;
4. Specialist Academic Studies – lasting for 1 year and carrying 60 ECTS, for students who have achieved at least 300 ECTS in previous studies.

Formal Adult education is based on the approved national curricula within the primary and secondary education systems, as regulated by the [Law on the Foundations of the Education System](#), [Law on Primary Education](#), [Law on Secondary Education](#) and [Law on Adult Education](#). Although based on the mainstream primary and secondary education concepts, achievement standards for these programmes are adjusted to the adult population. There are two types of programmes:

- general formal adult education, which aims to raise achievement in basic skills, and
- vocational formal education, aiming to acquire a recognised qualification during adulthood.

Adults who receive primary education according to the adult education programme are persons older than 15 years. Adults who receive secondary adult education are persons older than 17 years of age.

Main concepts

Non-formal education is identically defined by the [Law on the National Qualification Framework](#) and the Law on Adult Education as organized adult learning processes accomplished through specific programs in order to acquire knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes aimed at work, personal and social development.

[Law on Youth](#) adjusts the definition to the youth population defining non-formal education of young people as a set of organized and youth-customized educational activities not foreseen by the formal education system and based on their needs and interests, the principles of voluntary and active participation of young people in a learning process and promotion of democratic values, through which young people acquire competences necessary for personal potential development, active participation in society and better employability.

[National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) comprise both definitions.

There is no universally accepted single definition of **early school leaving** within the strategic and legal framework in Serbia.

The legal basis for the inclusive education policy was given in the 2009 [Law on the Foundations of the Education System](#). The main objectives of these policies and strategies were initially aimed at improving the quality and inclusiveness of preschool and primary education and improving the educational achievements of all students. Children from vulnerable social groups were particularly focused according to the [Progress Report for 2018](#).

Even though, there is no specific definition of special need education yet, the [Law on the Education System Foundations](#) placed it under the frame of the mainstream education system. Regardless of the severity of disability, all children have the right to participate in regular preschool, primary and secondary school programmes, if their parents decide so. Based on **psychological assessment**, a special team made of school specialists and parents (inclusion team) may create an **Individual Education Plan** (*Individualni obrazovni plan – IOP*) Glossary for a particular child/pupil/student. The purpose of this plan is to eliminate all teaching, learning, communication, physical and other barriers and provide conditions for an unobstructed learning process.

6.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Main actors

As described in the national description in Eurydice database/ [2.6 Administration and Governance at Central and/or Regional Level](#), the [Ministry of Education, Science and](#)

Technological Development bears the overall responsibility for developing and implementing education policy in Serbia.

The Ministry is regulated in the following manner and it organises the work through sectors that are responsible for certain levels and aspects of education:

1. Department for Preschool and Primary Education;
2. Department for Secondary Education and Adult Education;
3. Department for International Cooperation and European Integrations;
4. Department for Higher Education;
5. Department for Human and Minority Rights in Education;
6. Department for Dual Education and Upbringing;
7. Department for Digitalization in Education and Science;
8. Department for Students' Standards and Investments;
9. Department for Legal Issues;
10. Department for Finances;
11. Department for Inspection Issues;
12. Department for Science;
13. Department for Technological Development, Transfer of Technologies and Innovation System.

In addition to the Ministry, other actors constitute the system. The **National Education Council** and the **Council for Vocational and Adult Education**, appointed by the Parliament and by the Government, respectively, provide support to the promotion and development of education. These bodies design, monitor and coordinate the development of education and training, as well as monitor and coordinate the interests and needs of all social partners.

The **Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation** is a body established by the government with the aim of evaluation of education and providing recommendations for the provision of the system of quality education. Key activities of the Institute are defining standards in education, evaluation of education, training participants in the education system.

The **Institute for Improvement of Education** is a body established by the Republic of Serbia that performs developmental, advisory and research work in preschool, primary and secondary education in order to monitor, ensure and improve the quality and development of the educational system.

In accordance with the **Law on Higher Education**, the **National Council for Higher Education** is responsible for ensuring the development and promotion of the quality of higher education.

National Entity for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education of Serbia - NEAQA is established by the Government to perform the tasks of accreditation, to check the quality of higher education institutions and units within their constituency, to evaluate study programs and to ensure quality in higher education. Professional body of the NEAQA is the **Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance**.

The Qualification Agency is in charge of the coordination and support of the National Qualifications Framework in Serbia (NQFS) Council, the cooperation with relevant international bodies and institutions and referencing of NQFS with the European Qualifications Framework, the coordination and support of the Sector Skills Councils as well as support of the development of Qualifications Standards.

General distribution of responsibilities

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development has established 18 district school authorities (see Glossary) for performing professional and pedagogical supervision, external evaluation of the institutions' work, supporting development planning and improving the quality of the institution's work.

The Ministry within the district school authorities:

1. conducts professional-pedagogical supervision in institutions;
2. plans and implements external evaluation of the institutions' work;
3. monitor and propose professional development of teachers, educators, professional associates, directors and secretaries of the institution and make proposals for professional development;
4. support development planning, development of preschool, school and educational programs and improvement of the quality of education, in support of self-evaluation and implementation of external evaluation;
5. participate in the preparation of the plan for the development of education for the district for which the school administration has been established and monitor its implementation;
6. ensure all conditions for institutions to smoothly maintain an education database within the unique education information system;
7. cooperate with all competent authorities, services and organizations in the particular district;
8. participate in the planning of the institutions' network.

Local self-government bodies, their structure, authority and scope of action, as well as the role of other organizations and institutions at the local level, are regulated by the [Law on Local Self-Government](#). In addition to this law, the work of local self-government is in more detail regulated by the municipal or city statute. The municipality among other things, takes care of citizens' needs in the field of education (preschool, primary and secondary education), scientific research and innovation activities, culture, health and social care, child protection, sports and physical education.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

In accordance with the Law on Youth, the Local Youth Council (see Glossary) is the governmental advisory body of the Municipal Assembly/City Assembly responsible for cross-sectoral collaborative work. 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. It 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.).

Members of the Council are representatives of: Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Ministry for Labour, 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".

6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

National strategy

There is no national strategy in the Republic of Serbia dealing particularly with prevention of early leaving from upper secondary education. However, both major strategies relevant for youth, the [Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia by 2020](#) and the [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) refer to the problem of early leaving from education and training. Special attention is dedicated to the coverage and retention of pupils and students in all education levels.

According to the **Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia by 2020**, reaching significantly higher number of pupils is a priority task in realizing the mission of the general and art secondary education and the long-term increase of people with tertiary education. A key policy in this direction is to enable children from poor families and children from rural areas to gain secondary education (and subsequently higher education). The Strategy aims at raising the quality and specificity of art and general secondary education. To achieve this, the Strategy proposes the following measures:

1. creating support for children from poor families and children from rural areas;
2. providing affirmative support measures to specific groups of pupils who are systematically excluded from this type of schooling (e.g. Roma children, children with disabilities and disabilities);
3. adoption of laws on gymnasiums and art schools and corresponding by-laws, to operationalize and specify the profile of general education and define working conditions;
4. raising the attractiveness of secondary education through different forms and methods of work, flexible and wide offer of teaching, extracurricular activities and modularization of the program which enables individualization of teaching and work at different difficulty levels;
5. not implementing general and art programmes in mixed schools with the same teaching staff, as this undermines the specificity of work and reduces students' interest in general and art secondary education;
6. development of a special document on art education from pre-school level to the university level.

Action plan further, name the [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#), [National Educational Council of the Republic of Serbia](#) and the [Institute for Improvement of Education](#) as responsible for strengthening the educational function of secondary schools to reduce early school leaving.

When it comes to the vocational secondary education, the Strategy envisages a system of measures to reduce the number of dropouts and name the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development as the main carriers of the actions:

1. introducing a system of career guidance and counselling in schools;
2. developing assistance programmes for vulnerable groups to realize inclusive principles in education;
3. introducing vocational education programmes at all levels of National Qualification Framework (NQF).

Planned measures:

1. Apply methodology for monitoring and measuring early school leaving rates and monitor the number of pupils in each enrolled generation through a single information system;
2. reduce the current dropout rate by 50%;
3. train teachers and professional associates in each vocational secondary school for career guidance of pupils;

4. develop and test different aid programs for vulnerable groups;
5. ensure that students who have dropped out of secondary education receive some form of vocational education and training and obtain their first qualification;
6. in sectors where there is a high demand for certain qualifications, with low student interest in enrolment and a high dropout rate, develop specific vocational education and training programs at the required qualification levels.

Similarly, the [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#), [National Educational Council of the Republic of Serbia](#) and the [Institute for Improvement of Education](#) were responsible to:

1. develop methodology for monitoring and measurement of HE system leaving;
2. monitor and measure leaving of the HE system;
3. develop and promote career guidance centres;
4. adopt measures to reduce HE dropping out.

There were no major revisions/updates of the strategy or action plan since its introduction, however two [Progress Report on The Action Plan for the Implementation of The Strategy for Education Development in Serbia by 2020](#) were performed by 2019:

- [Draft Progress Report for 2018](#)
- [Draft Progress Report for 2017](#)

Besides certain progress in coverage at all educational levels, the 2018 Progress Report shows that the monitoring and measuring early school leaving remains the main problem. Student records are not entirely functional and although some data may be obtained from secondary schools, they are largely unsystematic and, in a number of cases, unreliable.

The second strategic goal of the **National Youth Strategy 2015-2025** (see [1.3 National youth strategy](#) for more details) refers to youth education and training. Its specific goal 3 further emphasise:

- the need to develop preventive action programmes to reduce the number of early school leavers,
- the need to enhance mechanisms for practical support for young people from vulnerable education groups to meet their needs,
- the need to develop mechanisms to support young people who have dropped out of education to return to the education system and obtain a qualification.

These specific goals are to be realized in cooperation of the ministries responsible for education and for youth.

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 has not undergone any revisions/updates since its adoption. By the end of 2019, 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 second evaluation indicate that the execution rate for most of the predicted activities is rather low. The most emphasis during the indicated period was put on developing mechanisms for practical support for young people from vulnerable education groups to meet their needs, especially through teacher and professional associates training programmes for better adaptation to the needs of young people from sensitive social groups. On the other hand, none of the activities that would contribute to the development of the support mechanisms for young people who have dropped out of education to return to the education system and obtain a qualification was realised.

Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

[Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia by 2020](#) set the goal to reduce the dropout rate from primary education below 5% in one generation and to increase the number of children enrolling secondary school (at least 95% of those who finish primary school).

The section of the [Law on the Foundations of the Education System](#) that regulates the responsibilities of the National Education Council and the Council for Vocational and Adult Education and Training defines that these bodies are responsible for monitoring, analysing and making recommendations for reducing the dropout rates of children and students from the education system, and to propose measures education continuation of the persons who have left the system.

In 2015, the [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#) prepared a comprehensive set of proposed indicators for monitoring the state of affairs in education based on previously defined [indicators](#) by the National Education Council in 2011. One category of indicators contains a group of 42 indicators related to the percentage of population engaged in schooling, student progress and completion within primary, secondary and tertiary education. The set of indicators was updated in 2014 to include the indicator for monitoring early school leavers. Even though this set of indicators is not officially adopted it presents a great effort of the top-level authorities to increase the number of relevant data for planning, monitoring and assessment of the educational situation, which both relevant strategies detected as high priorities.

Amendments to the [Law on the Foundations of the Education System](#) included that the school should provide additional support to children and students who are at risk of early school leaving by ensuring the development, adoption and implementation of the individual education plan. The Law in addition regulates the obligation of the school (and deadlines) to notify parents if the pupil does not attend classes, and in case of their inadequate response, also notify the local self-government and the competent social welfare service.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia as one of the measures for **Employment and Social Reform Programme – ESRP** states increasing the level of education within vulnerable groups and reducing regional disparities. In order to achieve this measure, it is important to:

- Establish a system for early identification of children at increased risk of early school leaving, as well as children at risk of not being included in education (e.g. asylum seekers, children without personal documents, etc.);
- Establish, in cooperation with the relevant ministries, local governments and educational institutions, a coordinated system of prevention, intervention and compensation of early school leaving (...).

The project **Combating early school leaving in Serbia through effective dropout prevention and intervention measures at the school level** implemented by the Centre for Education Policy in partnership with UNICEF Serbia and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia aimed to contribute to the reduction of dropout and early school leaving of children and young people through establishing and implementing mechanisms for early identification of children at risk of dropout, responding and implementing effective school-level prevention and intervention measures. Throughout the project, a Dropout Prevention Model, a set of instruments for identifying students at risk, prevention and intervention at school level was developed.

As a compensation measure, a "second chance" was provided for early school leavers to return to the system and continue their education. **The "Second Chance" – Systemic Development of Elementary Practice Based Adult Education in Serbia** is the project run by the Ministry of Education and Science in the period 2011-2013 funded by the

European Union Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. The overall objective was to build a modern system of functional elementary education for adults (FEEA) in the Republic of Serbia. The project has developed an adult elementary education curriculum for three years (one cycle each year) and the programme is published in the [Bylaw on Curriculum for Primary Adult Education](#), which is modelled on functional adult education. In addition, teachers have been trained in the implementation of this programme, and the programme was piloted in 80 primary schools in Serbia and included 4,000 students over 15 years of age with incomplete primary education or without vocational qualifications, priority being given to socially vulnerable target groups.

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

There are no top-level authorities' initiatives for actions aiming at preventing and reducing ELET through non-formal or informal learning or youth work.

Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development), together with the National Education Council and the Council for Vocational and Adult Education, plays a key role in the development and implementation of policies and measures aimed at reducing early school leaving in Serbia.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports is a key institution for the development and promotion of youth policy at the national level, as well as for supporting its implementation at the local level. It is a key institution for the development and implementation of the National Youth Strategy and the Career Guidance and Counselling Strategy, as well as providing information to young people on employment and volunteer work, promoting non-formal education, etc.

6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

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

First, the adoption of the [Law on Adult Education](#) and then the [Law on the National Qualification Framework](#) (NQF) in 2018 made the significant progress in creating conditions for recognition of prior learning acquired through non-formal education and informal learning.

Even though the Law on Adult Education does not recognize the specificity of non-formal education programmes in youth sector that are not aimed at gaining a specific qualification and vocational training, the recognition of competences acquired through youth work was essential for young people.

In January 2019 **youth work was officially recognised as a profession**, and a youth worker was included in the new [Classification of Occupations](#). This was a major step towards contributing to the second strategic goal of the [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#): quality and possibilities for acquiring qualifications and competence development and innovation of young people.

The realization of this goal, among other things implied the expected results and planned activities:

- support the activities of professionalization of youth work through formal and informal education in line with the standards of youth work profession;

- create a mechanism for recognition of competences acquired through youth work and recognition of youth work profession through the NQF and the Classification Register.

Thanks to the inclusion of the youth worker profession in the Classification Register 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.

Information and guidance

The Ministry responsible for education promotes NQF and various opportunities for learning and achieving qualification standards.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance system of the arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal competences does not exist in the Republic of Serbia.

6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

Policy framework

There is no particular national strategy dealing with internationalisation and mobility, but the overall [Strategy for Education Development in Serbia by 2020](#) envisages the adoption of a strategy which should include the mobility of international and local students. It also provides a general framework for internalisation of higher education while some higher education institutions (HEIs) have developed their own internationalisation strategies, and others have developed rulebooks by which mobility of students is regulated.

At the level of HE, the international cooperation of HEIs, the mobility of teachers and students are perceived as elements that contribute to better quality of higher education, increase competences of both teachers and students and gives them a better chance of employment. The Strategy envisages creating opportunities for mobility in all three cycles of education, in the structure of study programmes and programmes for the achievement of joint degrees with foreign universities, and binding HEIs to issue a diploma supplement.

The main actions lines for HE listed in the Strategy for Education Development in Serbia 2020 are:

- Enhance international openness of the HE system
- Establish international mobility of students, staff and researchers
- Internationalisation of study programmes
- Strengthening strategic partnerships with HEI from other countries.

In addition it defines the following goals without specifying exact targets:

- Increasing the number of incoming and outgoing staff,
- Increasing the number of incoming and outgoing PhD students,
- Increasing the number of international projects,
- Increasing the number of study programmes accredited and offered in English for foreign students.

A Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and the Republic of Serbia, approved in 2013 enabled the participation of Serbia in the European Union programmes laid in Framework Agreement between the European Community and Serbia and Montenegro in 2004. This further led to special agreement between the EU and the Republic of Serbia on the Serbia's participation in the Erasmus+ program in 2014. Serbia's participation in the programme was gradually built

up, and in 2019 it became a full member, enabling youth mobility through several types of projects and activities funded through the program.

Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education

As it is described in more details on Eurydice page [13.2 Mobility in Higher Education](#), higher education institutions from Serbia actively participated in the EU programmes for international cooperation, especially in the previous Tempus programme, but also in Erasmus Mundus and Lifelong Learning Programme which provided mobility opportunities and fostered international cooperation.

Currently running programme Erasmus+ enables student and staff mobility through Erasmus+ international credit mobility projects. The Republic of Serbia has been participating in the Erasmus + programme since the beginning of 2014. So far, according to available data, 4410 students have been exchanged or participated in joint masters or doctoral degree programmes in Erasmus + Member and partner States.

Other programmes and projects that enabled mobility of student and academic staff in Serbia are:

- [CEEPUS](#) Central European Exchange Program for University Studies
- [Campus Europae](#)

CEEPUS is an exchange programme for students and teachers that aims at improving education. The programme is based on international agreements signed by the member states and a student exchange is organized within university networks.

The outgoing mobility of students studying in Serbia is promoted and funded through the **Fund for Young Talents**. It was founded by the [Government of the Republic of Serbia](#). It is being administered by the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#). The main goal is to support young talent's achievements and their professional development by awarding scholarships to up to 500 top students from Serbia for masters or doctoral studies at the universities of the European Union member states and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), as well as in world's leading universities. Funds are determined in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, in line with earnings and fiscal capacities of the budget of the Republic of Serbia, at the proposal of the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Depending on the funds, the Fund for Young Talents determines the amount and the number of scholarships for each calendar year.

In addition, almost all universities and many colleges in Serbia have established bilateral and multilateral cooperation with universities in the EU countries, the USA, Canada, Asia and other regions. This cooperation is focused mainly on mobility of students, study visits, exchange of teaching staff and research.

At the level of secondary education **Erasmus+ programme** is available to VET pupils. Learner's mobility of VET pupils is possible for VET schools in Serbia through KA1 Vocational Education and Training component of Erasmus+ programme as of 2017. This action can finance projects promoting VET traineeships up to 12 months. Pupils of secondary VET schools can be hosted at a workplace or at another VET school.

The [Future Leaders Exchange](#) (FLEX) Programme is a United States Department of State-sponsored program for secondary school students from countries of Eurasia. The program provides merit-based scholarships for students to travel to the United States, live with a host family, and attend an U.S. high school for a full academic year. The program is free of charge as it is funded by the Government of the United States and, so far it is attended by over 600 students from Serbia.

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

Serbia takes part in the **Erasmus+ Youth in Action**, a key instrument for non-formal and informal learning in a European dimension. [The Foundation Tempus](#) has been delegated the task of a body in charge of provision of information and guidance service on outward learning mobility in a document issued by the Government in May 2019. In line with the document, the Foundation Tempus is in charge of implementing activities related to the internationalisation of education, promotion of formal and non – formal learning opportunities for young people with the aim of supporting international cooperation in education. For these purposes informing about opportunities to participate in Erasmus+ Youth in Action through website, email, telephone, individual consultations (all year), as well as Erasmus + Info days are being organized annually.

In March 2019, Serbia has become the 38th member state of the [Eurodesk network](#). The National Eurodesk Centre in Serbia operates within the Tempus Foundation and is located in the Tempus Foundation Information Centre. Eurodesk is a European network which provides free, high-quality and reliable information about the opportunities for mobility of young people, promoting European mobility programs such as Erasmus + and the European Solidarity Corps, encouraging active citizenship of young people and the development of youth policy.

Quality assurance

There is no centralized quality assurance system for evaluating cross-border mobility programmes. However, the Erasmus+ Programme has quality assurance built into the application and project implementation processes.

In addition to this, in 2019 Serbia became a member of the [RAY network](#), a self-governed European research network of National Agencies of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme and their research partners. So far, Serbia participated in [RAY MONITORING](#) research project whose research objectives are focused at the implementation of Youth in action in general and the effects learning mobilities have on individuals and participating organisations all with the aim of contributing to the youth policy development and quality assurance and quality development in the implementation of Erasmus+: Youth in Action.

6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

Educational support

Right to education is guaranteed for everyone by the [Constitution of the Republic of Serbia](#). Furthermore, the [Law on the Foundations of the Education System \(2017\)](#) further states that persons with disabilities have the right to education with respect to their educational needs, together with individual or group additional support in teaching and learning or in a special educational group or school. Additional educational, health or social support can be provided for children and adults from vulnerable groups in the cases of:

- social deprivation,
- developmental and other disabilities,
- learning difficulties and
- other conditions requiring additional support.

Until 2009, inclusive education in Serbia relied on a number of international documents as well as a series of pilot projects through which the concept of inclusive education was developed. Between 2000 and 2009, a series of projects were implemented that contributed to the creation of resources and practices that further led to the changes at the system level.

The legal foundation of inclusive education came with the [Law on the Foundations of the Education System](#) in 2009. Bases set in this law have been further elaborated through a series of by-laws and specific laws.

The most important elements of a legally regulated inclusive education policy in Serbia include (see more on Eurydice chapter 12: [Educational Support and Guidance](#)):

- prohibition of any discrimination and segregation;
- identification measures for children in need of special / additional support;
- right to free education and additional financial support;
- the possibility of education through individualized work and three types of Individual Education Plans (IEP) that may involve the adjustment of: curricula, teaching methods, materials or grading and achievement standards and learning outcomes;
- customized assessment and evaluation policies: formative assessment, assessment according to IEP, customized final examination, external evaluation by quality standards that includes a number of indicators relevant to inclusive education ;
- engagement of pedagogical and personal assistants, set standards of competence for the teaching profession, formulated priorities for professional development including inclusive education;
- formation of expert teams for inclusive education, inclusion of representatives of parents of children from vulnerable groups in the Parents Council, new support policies, local inter-ministerial commissions for assessing the needs for educational, health and social support;
- existence of special education schools available for parents who prefer their children to attend a school of this type, usually in case with severe conditions of disability or learning difficulties etc.

As mentioned, disabled pupils and students may receive financial support for their schooling. Students from socially disadvantaged families are entitled to social scholarships. National student scholarships and credits ([Učenički i studentski krediti i stipendije](#)) 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.

Some of the major national inclusive education support projects upon its introduction in the legal system:

- **DILS – Delivery of Improved Local Services** was a four-year long project (2009-2012) funded by the World Bank loan that contributed to the inclusive education by elaborating procedures for inclusive education at school level, enabling national training for all schools, providing grants for schools' inclusive projects, developing manuals and guides for inclusive education, establishing and coordinating an Inclusive Education Support Network and conducting a national wide survey on inclusive education.
- **IPA project "Education for All"** is a conceptually elaborated project "Roma assistants" through which the inclusion of Roma assistants in teaching began. Later a new profession of teaching assistants was piloted and then regulated.
- **IPA project "Second Chance"** from 2010 deals with expanding the network of schools that offer additional education to adults who have left the education system before the end of primary school, which includes.

Non-formal education for persons above a certain age is acquired through the system of **Publicly Recognized Activity Organizers** (PRAO), organizations that offer adult education programs. The [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#) adopted by laws on non-formal education in 2015. Primary and secondary schools as well as other organizations that meet the requirements prescribed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development can be PRAOs. These may include nongovernmental organisations, cultural institutions, associations, open universities, career centres, consulting and training centres, private schools or any other institutions registered for educational programmes implementation.

Social cohesion and equal opportunities

The institutional framework through a series of legal acts prescribes accessibility, non-discrimination and quality conditions for education of all RS citizens, regardless of their physical, intellectual, age, religious, cultural, national and other characteristics. Some of the main legal documents are:

- [Constitution of the Republic of Serbia](#)
- [Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia by 2020](#)
- [National Gender Equality Strategy \(2016-2020\) with the Action Plan 2016-2018](#)
- [Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma \(2016-2025\)](#)
- [National Youth Strategy \(2015–2025\)](#)
- [Law on Gender Equality](#)
- [Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination](#)
- [Strategy for poverty reduction in Serbia](#)

Besides the measures mentioned above related to inclusive education, all primary and secondary schools have the obligation to implement citizenship education as a optional classes which include topics of human rights, fighting discrimination, social awareness, democratic principles and values, solidarity and similar. Citizenship education is organized as a separate subject from ISCED 1-3 in both general and vocational education at ISCED 3. Every year pupils/parents have to choose between having classes of Religious Education or Citizenship Education. Professional training and guidelines for teachers in the area of citizenship education are provided in order to qualify them for the classes.

The [National Youth Strategy \(2015–2025\)](#) as one of the main strategic goals defines the improved quality and opportunities for gaining qualifications and developing the competences and innovation of young people. To achieve this goal, a number of measures are envisaged to create the conditions for the development of creativity, innovation and initiative of young people, acquisition of competences within lifelong learning, as well as the promotion of equal access to education for all and support for young people from vulnerable social groups.

The objectives and measures for the promotion of gender equality in Serbia are defined by the umbrella [National Gender Equality Strategy \(2016-2020\) with the Action Plan 2016-2018](#). The Strategy approaches the role of education by striving to improve gender awareness and eliminate gender stereotypes and prejudices through the improvement of educational programs in terms of gender-responsive content at all levels.

Increasing educational attainment and gender equality in Roma education is one of the key strategic goals of the [Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma \(2016-2025\)](#). The first strategic objective is to ensure full inclusion of Roma children and young people in quality pre-school, primary and secondary education, to achieve greater coverage of Roma students in the student population and to support the education of young and adult ELET students with effective guidance and effective mechanisms for combating discrimination and achieving the conditions for the enjoyment of all rights for Roma in the education system.

In light of migrant crisis, an organized process of inclusion of children and young migrants / asylum seekers / refugees in the education system of Serbia was initiated during the 2016/17 school year. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development drafted an Expert Instruction for the inclusion of migrants, refugees / asylum-seekers in the education system. The Instruction was followed by the development of a manual intended for school employees. These actions confirmed the strategic commitment for providing the necessary systemic conditions necessary for successful implementation of this process.

Moreover, 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" (["Digitalno nasilje – prevencija i reagovanje"](#)).

6.7 Skills for innovation

Innovation in formal education

A specific goal of National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 is dedicated to youth entrepreneurship. Responsible for implementation for the specific goal: *Ensuring stimulating conditions for development of youth entrepreneurship* are the ministry in charge of employment, ministry in charge of economy, ministry in charge of youth and the ministry in charge of education. The Strategy defined the expected results and planned activities:

- creation of incentive framework for public policies that defines youth entrepreneurship and its environment;
- developing mechanisms for acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge and skills as well as financial literacy within education;
- developing sustainable support programmes for young people opting for self-employment;
- creation of the conditions for the development of youth social entrepreneurship based on social understanding and support for entrepreneurship and innovation.

As previously presented in the chapter [3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence](#) and Eurydice study on [Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe](#), skills for innovation are fostered through curricula as Entrepreneurship separate subject or/and extracurricular activities. Entrepreneurship is recognized as an important **cross-curricular competence** and learning outcomes are defined for all ISCED levels. 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.

The [Law on the Foundations of the Education System](#) envisages schools to establish pupils' cooperatives in order to develop the extracurricular activities and the entrepreneurial spirit. In this regard, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development has in 2018 adopted the Bylaw on pupils' co-operatives specifying the management and running of the pupil's cooperative.

The subject Entrepreneurship is compulsory in the significant number of VET schools. It was developed for 50 schools from five fields of work and the curriculum matches each of the educational profiles. The approach is multidisciplinary, and focus is on practical work. The subject aims to develop entrepreneurial and business knowledge, skills, behaviours, values and entrepreneurial way of thinking. It also covers the knowledge and skills necessary for professional development, job-hunting and self-employment (including the development of a simple business plan).

Top-level 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. Continuing professional development (CPD) courses for teachers also have been developed to support them.

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

Various institutions and partner organizations in Serbia are involved in entrepreneurial learning. One of such organizations is [Junior Achievement Serbia](#) which is a part of a global network of Junior Achievement Worldwide, the world's largest entrepreneurial education program. The implementation of the program is carried out with the help of teachers trained through seminars certified by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the business sector, which contribute to the youth education process through mentoring, lectures and participation in competitions. The implementation of programmes is financially, mostly supported by the business sector. The activities of this program relate to entrepreneurship, experiential learning, the development of skills that contribute to employability, economic and financial literacy, innovation and creativity. Unique educational methods have been developed, based on the partnership of local and international companies and agencies, with the aim of helping students acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.

[Fund for Young Talents](#) under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, among others, has a task is to provide awards to secondary school students for their achievements in recognized competitions in the country and abroad. The calendar of the competitions is published for each school year and cover competitions in school, municipal, regional and republic level related to school subjects. Some of them especially target innovation skills, such are musters of pupils' cooperatives and companies, competitions of pupils' research and art works etc.

[Decade of Entrepreneurship](#) is a set of governmental measures not directly focused on youth, however it does bring together various initiatives, measures and projects aimed at developing the entrepreneurial spirit among young people: trainings, professional development, retraining and employment support, as well as professional and consulting assistance to improve business. [Entrepreneurship Portal](#) is developed within the Decade of Entrepreneurship. It is administered by the Ministry of Economy provides information on:

- support programmes 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 list of subprogrammes offered on the portal indicates that innovation skills are given significance through: Innovation Co-Financing Program and Early Development Programme -implemented by [Serbian Innovation Fund](#). Further, Competition - The best technological innovation is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. Entrepreneurs, small and medium enterprises, high tech companies, secondary schools and student teams can participate in the competition.

[Youth Entrepreneurship](#) is another portal maintained by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry aims to provide important information about financial and administrative aspects of starting a business. This portal among other, provides a [list of support programmes for beginners in business](#).

As part of the project "Our community, our future - greater cooperation and employment of young people", an [interactive platform neetmladi.info](#) dedicated to youth in the NEET situation was published. The project seeks to ensure continuous and systematic support to young people in the NEET situation. Through working with civil society organizations and institutions, project implementers develop and advocate services that provide support to young people in accordance with their specific needs. The platform will also include a practical guide for organizing quality work placements and field youth work, as well as research on youth and entrepreneurship.

6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

National strategy

At the beginning of 2020, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted a new [Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020 – 2025](#). The strategy does not point out young people as a separate target group, but it does not exclude them either. The strategy involves improving media literacy by continuing the process of introducing media literacy into the formal education system, as well as developing the competencies of teachers and professors. The Ministry of Culture and Information with partners, the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Commissioner for Equality Protection and Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media (REM) are responsible for the implementation. Holders of the concrete measures will be known when the Action plan is developed. As the Strategy is newly adopted no monitoring or revisions have been conducted.

The overall objective of another newly adopted [Strategy of Digital Skills Development for the period 2020 - 2024](#) is to improve the digital knowledge and skills of all citizens including members of vulnerable social groups and youth. Some of the measures the strategy entails are:

- Aligning the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) regarding digital skills;
- Improving curricula related to digital competencies in pre-university education;
- Accreditation of training programmes for the development of digital skills of citizens
- Encouraging organizations and institutions that have acquired the status of Publicly Recognized Organizers of Activities (PROA) to implement programmes for the acquisition of professional competences in the field of digital skills;
- Establishment of various training models for the development of citizens' digital skills within public spaces, "traveling" trainings, as well as online training programmes through mass open online trainings (MOOCs);
- Fostering organisation of Training for Trainers (ToT), while encouraging all forms of peer education for developing citizens' digital skills;
- Promote peer-to-peer (P2P) education and exchange of good practices through the organization of events, professional publications and the development of online portals;
- Raising citizens' awareness of the need to adopt digital skills;
- Conducting an educational campaign for children on safe internet use and use of modern technologies (IT Caravan);

- Providing continuous support to children and parents about smart and safe use of the Internet (through the National Contact Center for child safety on the Internet) etc.

The 5th goal of the [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) related to youth safety refers to supporting programs that empower young people to recognize and adequately respond to digital violence, i.e. violence resulting from the use of information technology. The Strategy predicted 15 supported activities / projects (including IT education campaigns to promote useful, creative and secure use of information technology). The Action plan name the ministries in charge of education and youth and sport to carry out measures related to this goal. For the period 2018-2020 17.520.000 RSD was predicted for these activities. [Evaluation of the National Youth Strategy \(2015-2025\) Action Plan 2015-2017](#) states that by 2017, the execution percentage for this activity was 40%.

Media literacy and online safety through formal education

In Serbia, there is no explicit policy on media literacy in the formal education system, rather it has been recognized as a broader concept of functional literacy. In the [Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia by 2020](#) it is viewed in the context of key competences and lifelong learning and as such, in past decades it was a part of different reforms and was integral part of inclusive education reform, introduction of citizenship education, introduction of professional development and training programmes for teachers etc.

At the level of primary and secondary education, media and information literacy are incorporated in the optional subject Citizenship Education. The subject is optional in relation to Religious education and counts 36 hours per year.

Moreover, since the school year 2018/2019, the subject "Language, Media and Culture" was introduced into the general and some vocational upper secondary schools as **optional subject** in the first two grades. Upon completion of the programme, pupils should be able to:

- critically consider the positive and negative impact of the media;
- assess the importance and impact of information and sources of information and connect them with own experience to solve different situations;
- recognizes examples of manipulation, discrimination and hate speech in the media and has a critical attitude towards them;
- understands the responsibility for creation of his/ hers own media messages;
- communicates in a constructive way;
- expresses readiness to participate in actions aimed at promoting media culture;
- distinguishes cultural from popular content and on that basis makes value judgments.

Some of the issues related to media literacy have also been covered in **mother tongue classes**. When dealing with media, these subjects are mostly focused on strengthening critical thinking. Digital literacy on the other side, should be included in the teaching of the subject Technical education and technology in addition to another optional subject Informatics and Computer Science. Within these subjects, students are expected to acquire the necessary technical competence to master skills and form attitudes that contribute to the development of computer literacy. In addition, it is expected to equip students with the skills and knowledge to efficiently and rationally use computers in a way that does not endanger their physical and mental health.

When it comes to higher education, more than 100 study programmes include courses in the fields of media education or education for media in HEs in Serbia. Some of them are developed for education experts and teachers.

In 2017, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has embarked on an consultation process, which ended with the adoption of the [Digital Competence Framework](#)

– **Teacher for a Digital Age**. The Framework was updated in 2019. It was created with the aim of supporting teachers from the education system of the Republic of Serbia in the process of integrating digital concepts, tools, and content into everyday educational practice.

The official Catalogue of the accredited programmes of teachers, educators and professional associates' continuous professional development by the [Institute for Improvement of Education](#), offers a range of seminars covering the topics in media literacy and ICT. Many of these programs and seminars are offered by accredited civil society organizations, professional associations and regional centres for the development of educational employees.

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

The [Strategy of Digital Skills Development for the period 2020 - 2024](#) defines the development of digital skills as a necessary response to the emergence of new technologies and their impact on the digital society and digital economy, and implies the skills needed for employment, productivity, creativity and success, with information security and online safety. As an important medium for achieving this, the Strategy has recognized non-formal education as it allows greater innovation and up-to-date opportunities compared to formal education system. In this sense it is perceived as an easier, faster, better and much cheaper way to acquire current knowledge. Collaboration between formal education and businesses is seen as the necessary effort to bridge the gap between education and training, on the one hand, and the needs and demands of the labour market, on the other.

Besides above mentioned accredited programmes of continuous professional development for teachers provided by the [Institute for Improvement of Education](#), the [Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications](#) encourages the development of the information society through programmes and projects under the common slogan "**Smart and Safe**". The aim of these activities is to educate and raise awareness of the need for prompt, proper and targeted involvement of citizens, the education system and the economy in modern digital streams.

Many civil society organisations deal with this topic and two active projects by [National Youth Council of Serbia](#) (KOMS) are aimed at media and digital literacy as well as online safety.

1. MLADI – Media Literacy Alliance and Digital Importance

The EuropAid project activities are aimed at improving the media and digital literacy of young people and providing them with the necessary tools and channels to express their opinions to a wider audience. Research on the image and perspective of reporting on youth in the media will be conducted within the project, and in addition projects and initiatives of youth associations and for young people will be supported with the aim of improving the media and digital literacy of young people.

2. Mladi mediji – mediji sa mladima i za mlade (Young media: media with and for the youth)

Young media: media with and for the youth is a multi-year project implemented by KOMS in collaboration with DW Academy and other media organizations. The project activities are aimed at empowering young people to critically consume media content, enhancing the capacity of the media to cover topics of relevance to young people through youth participation in media production and evaluation. During the three-year implementation period, KOMS has also established regular research activities in the field of youth media literacy, providing data on youth representation in media and ways of reporting on youth.

In July 2020, [Nova Iskra](#) organized *Youth Media Hub*, a training in media and digital literacy, intended for young people aged 16 to 22 who want to improve the technical, critical and digital literacy necessary for critical perception and interpretation of our

modern (media) environment. The training is implemented within the Joint Regional Programme "Dialogue for the Future", implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO, and funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF).

Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media

[National Contact Centre For Online Safety of Children](#) was established in 2017. Through this center, the [Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications](#) advises children, parents, students and teachers, as well as all other citizens, on the benefits and risks of using the Internet and safe ways to use new technologies through various awareness-raising activities. The Centre also conducts education on children's safety on the Internet by organizing seminars, workshops, presentations and information through print, electronic and other media. It is also possible to receive reports of harmful, inappropriate and illegal content and behaviour on the Internet, or to report threats to the rights and interests of the child. Competent institutions are involved in processing applications and responding: the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor's Office for high-tech crime, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Centres for Social Work and Health Centres.

National Contact Centre educators designed interactive presentations aimed at children and parents. Thus, began a program campaign called the [IT caravan](#). It is an educational campaign to promote the useful, creative and secure use of information technology. It was organized for the first time in mid-2016 and its fourth cycle is underway in 2020. These lectures held throughout Serbia were attended by more than 11,000 pupils and 3,800 parents. In April 2019, an extensive media campaign for children's safety on the Internet "**Your Internet Number - 19833**" was launched, promoting the protection of children on the Internet and the National Contact Centre.

Serbia is a member of the **Insafe network** of centres for safer internet which with support of the **Better internet for Kids – BIK programme** conducts educational and awareness campaigns, leads counselling lines - helpline support services for children, and works closely with young people through panels to provide evidence-based practice and access to stakeholders.

Serbia, as part of various Internet safety awareness campaigns, is also participating in activities to mark [Safer Internet Day](#). This day was established in 2004 and is celebrated under the auspices of the Insafe Network in 140 countries worldwide.

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

Information providers / counselling structures

Institutions founded by the Government and/or local authorities, which, alongside other goals and activities, offer training for youth as well for other age categories.

- The [National Employment Service](#) with its departments in 30 towns all over Serbia offers career guidance, organisation of professional internships, prequalification trainings, job search programmes and other kinds of training for the unemployed;
- The Centres for the Professional Development of Adults are located in 12 towns in various parts of Serbia. Their scope is the following: identification of labour market needs and educational priorities, collaboration with local authorities, schools and other relevant institutions, and proposals for adult education programmes and their implementation;
- The [National Agency for Regional Development](#) provides different kinds of support for start-up companies and entrepreneurship on the local level, including professional development of adults.

Publicly Recognized Organizers of Activities (PROA) may include nongovernmental organisations, cultural institutions, associations, open universities, career centres, consulting and training centres, private schools or any other institutions registered for educational programmes implementation, which means they have to be approved by the [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#), as well as fulfil adult education standards as prescribed by the [Law on Adult Education](#).

[Euroguidance center](#) and Foundation Tempus organize career guidance and counselling events as well as information days, workshops and different types of campaigns regarding the non-formal education possibilities and mobilities for youth within Erasmus+ programme.

Awareness raising initiatives

There are no top-level authorities initiatives for raising awareness about the value of non-formal and informal learning.

6.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Information not available at the moment.

Ongoing debates

Expert consultations are currently underway on the new Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia by 2027. Its overall strategic goals are to improve the overall quality of the education and system, to align the education system with the immediate and developmental needs of individuals, economic, social, cultural contexts by increasing the quality of the processes and educational outcomes, increasing the coverage of the population through education from pre-school education to higher education and lifelong learning, ensuring the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning, and reaffirming the role of education in society and the state. The focus of the new strategy will be on developing key competencies for students, increasing enrolment at all levels of education, empowering and developing human resources and updating the teaching and learning environment.

7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The National Youth Strategy lists as one of its primary objectives to protect and improve health, to decrease health risks, and to develop youth-friendly health protection system. Compulsory health insurance is provided for all children, schoolchildren, and students up to the end of schooling and not beyond 26 years of age.

7.1 General context

Main trends in the health conditions of young people

Serbia collects data on young people health through different research and data collection mechanisms. The Institute of Public Health of Serbia issues yearly [Health Statistical Yearbook of Republic of Serbia](#) that provide statistical data on diagnosed diseases, conditions and injuries derived from the Youth and School children health services.

The Health Survey of the Population of Serbia in 2019 is a national survey that the Republic Statistical Office in cooperation with the Institute of Public Health of Serbia and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia conducted in the period from October 1 to December

30, 2019, in accordance with international standards ([European Health Interview Survey - EHIS, wave 3](#)).

According to the report of an international research [Health Behaviour in School-aged Children \(HBSC\)](#) in 2018 in Serbia, three quarters of the fifth grade primary school pupils rated their health as excellent (74.5% of boys and 75.7% of girls). Slightly fewer pupils consider their health to be excellent in the seventh grade of primary school (71% of boys and 61.7% of girls), while in the first grade of secondary school the smallest number of pupils rated their health as excellent (64.9% of boys and 50.1% girls).

The report further states that the majority (83%) of school-aged children are normally nourished, yet the **obesity** of children and adolescents in Serbia is on the increase, which can be tied to poor eating habits. A review of the nutrition habits of young people shows that less than 20 per cent of adolescents aged 13 to 15 years eat fruit at least once a day, while only around 25 per cent of them eat vegetables once a day. On the other side, more than 40 per cent of adolescents consume sweets at least once a day. Almost one-fifth of adolescents drink soft drinks more than once a day and the consumption of these beverages increases with the age.

Although young people self-assess their health highly, the report shows that among the primary health challenges that young people face are smoking, abuse of alcohol and drugs, and abuse and/or neglect, while injuries resulting from accidents remains the leading cause of death. A large number of young people first come into contact with **psychoactive substances** (tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs) during adolescence. 14.5% of pupils in the 5th and 7th grades of primary schools and the first grades of secondary schools smoked at least once in their lifetime. The frequency of **smoking** increases with age, with as many as 28.3% of first-grade high school pupils smoking at least once in their lives. Almost every second pupil (45.4%) in the 5th and 7th grade of primary schools and the 1st grade of secondary schools tried alcohol.

Prevalence of alcohol consumption ever during life among students of 5th and 6th grades of primary schools and 1st grade of secondary schools, by sex and grade (%)

	5 th grade primary school	7 th grade Primary school	1 st grade Secondary school	Total
Girls	11.5	32.2	67.6	40.7
Boys	24.8	44.4	71.0	50.4
Serbia	17.7	38.4	69.3	45.4

Source: [Health Behaviour in School-aged Children \(HBSC\) Report 2018](#), Institute for Public Health of Serbia

When it comes to **sexual and reproductive health**, low rate of contraceptive use is being reported especially among young women, which is affiliated with the increase in the sexually transmitted infections (STIs). HBSC report show that the largest number of the first graders in secondary schools (44%) had their first sexual intercourse at the age of 15. In the past decade, **gambling** has become popular among adolescents. The results of the HBSC research show that 34.6% of the 1st grade high school students in Serbia gambled. Youth also suffer from higher rates of **mental and behavioural disorders, including addiction, depression and suicide**, than the general population. A survey on the health status of people in Serbia indicated that 4.1 % of the total population display symptoms of depression. In 2018, 28 persons aged 15-24 years and 54 persons for aged 25-34 years committed suicide ([RSZO](#)). The data show a higher suicide rates in males than females, and in urban compared to rural youth population. The incidence of suicide is higher in the regions of Vojvodina and Belgrade than in the rest of the country ([UNICEF](#)).

Main concepts

The [Law on public health](#) follows the health concept by WHO, defining it as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. In addition, the Law defines **mental health** as behaviour, thinking, speech, feelings and mood of an individual, a relationship to oneself and others and as an integral part of individual health, well-being and community development. **Social health** includes the ability to form satisfactory interpersonal relationships, but also refers to the ability to adapt to different social situations and to respond appropriately in a variety of environments.

7.2 Administration and governance

Governance

There are four key policies of youth health in Serbia ([Youth and Public Policy in Serbia, 2014](#)):

- [Strategy for Youth Health Development in the Republic of Serbia](#),
- [National Youth Strategy](#),
- [Law on Health Care](#),
- [Decree on the National Health Care Programme for Women, Children and Youth](#)

The Strategy for Youth Health Development in the Republic of Serbia, designed by the Ministry of Health, is the main document for regulating youth health in Serbia. Its main objective is to promote **preventive health** action among youth.

The National Youth Strategy gives a special attention to youth health dedicating an entire strategic goal to this matter. Its objectives are to protect and improve health and well-being, to prevent and decrease health risks and develop a youth-friendly health protection system, to enable healthy lifestyles and improve measures for housing and independence of young people. The Strategy identifies two main specifically vulnerable groups of youth: the youth with disabilities and vulnerable and marginalized groups which refers to youth without parental care, the homeless, youth in institutions for social rehabilitation, the poor, members of national minorities, youth in need of special support, refugees and internally displaced persons.

The Law on Health Care regulates the health care system and the right to health care in the Republic of Serbia while the **Directive for Health Protection of Women, Schoolchildren and Students** regulates the implementation of health care and determines the programme for its implementation.

Main actors

Youth health policy is implemented by the [Ministry of Health](#) together with other institutions that are directly responsible for the provision of services outlined by the policies. Thus, the Ministry of Youth and Sports cooperate with the Ministry of Health to achieve goals set by the National Youth Strategy related to youth health.

The **Ministry of Health** is an umbrella authority for central regulation and supervision of health care. The National Assembly elects the members of the National Health Council and the Ethics Board of Serbia while different expert bodies are being appointed by the Minister.

The National Health Council consists of the representatives of the ministry in charge of health affairs, other competent ministries and other state bodies, institutes of public health and holders of public authority, as well as independent experts in the field of public health. It is responsible for the quality and development of the health care system, organization of health services, and health insurance system.

The Ethics Board of Serbia is responsible for the implementation of the provision of health care in Serbia on the principles of professional ethics, human and child's right.

The Ministry of Health is supported by several state authorities such as the National Public Health Institute with its network of regional branches, National Agency for Drugs and Medical Devices, National Agency for Accreditation of Health Care Institutions

The Public Health Institute of Serbia implemented different programmes related to youth health. As local institutions for primary health care (dom zdravlja) are responsible for preventive health care activities, most of the projects and activities are organized within these institutions. The formulated programmes and projects address issues like smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, and STDs. Other programmes targeting youth include protection of reproductive health, aiming at educating health workers about working with youth on sensitive issues of sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive health; violence prevention among youth, aiming at educating health and social workers who work with youth and establishing a social support network for youth in need; a national programme for the prevention of abuse of drugs and alcohol, aiming at early diagnosis of drug and alcohol abuse, education of family members, etc. ([Youth and Public Policy in Serbia, 2014](#))

General distribution of responsibilities

The **Ministry of Health** has the overall responsibility in supervision of health care thus, the health services are provided through a wide network of public health care institutions overseen by the Ministry of Health. At the level of autonomous province, regional, and municipal/local levels, the responsible bodies are provincial, regional, or municipal/local health authorities.

The basic organizational structure of the Serbian health care system consists of a network of the state-owned health institutions. Provision of health services for youth is organized on primary, secondary, and tertiary levels where all 3 levels are functionally interconnected to a single system. Medical institutions in private ownership are not fully integrated into the system even though initiatives for integration of private sector into health care system were undertaken by the Ministry of Health ([The Child Health Care System of Serbia, 2016](#)).

Cross-sectoral cooperation

The Ministry of Health cooperates mostly with the Ministries of Social Protection, Education, Youth, and Sports, and then with the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Labour.

7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

As presented in [UNICEF analysis](#) and based on [the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung](#) and [Ministry of Youth and Sports research](#), about one half of young people regularly engage in sports activities where boys are more engaged in sports than girls. Research also showed that adolescents of lower socio-economic status engage in sports less often than their peers from the families with higher socio-economic status. Regional disparities between young people engaging in recreational sports are also evident, with fewer youth engaged in recreational sports in South and Eastern Serbia, and Šumadija and Western Serbia. Another observation is that the rate of young people engaged in sports declines with age. The physical activity index for children up to 14 years is 30 per cent and of young people aged 15-30 years is 12.2 per cent.

National strategy(ies)

There is no current sports national strategy. Its development for the period from 2020 to 2030 and the Action Plan for its implementation is being discussed (see [7.8 Current debates and reforms](#)).

[National Youth Strategy](#) for the period 2015-2025 emphasise the importance of youth participation in sport activities especially through the strategic goal **improved health and well-being of young women and men**. Specific tasks within this goal related to sport are:

- improve and develop the system of school competitions and the introduction of a variety of sports disciplines and stimulate the inclusion of all young people, with special reference to young women;
- support the activities of introducing physical education classes in the curricula of higher education institutions.

Evaluation of the level of realization is presented in Chapter 7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition/ National strategy(ies). More details on National Youth Strategy is provided in [Chapter 1.3 National youth strategy](#).

The [Law on Sports](#) is the main top-level authority regulation in the field of sports and it is in act as of 2016. This law regulates:

- the rights and obligations of athletes and other natural persons in the sports system,
- issues related to the legal status,
- organization and registration of entrepreneurs and legal entities in the sports system,
- general interest as well as needs and interests of citizens in the field of sports,
- financing,
- categorizations in the field of sports,
- school and university sports and physical education,
- sports facilities,
- organization of sports events,
- national recognitions and awards for special contribution to sports development and affirmation and
- supervision over the work of organizations in the field of sports.

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

The [Fund for Young Talents](#) under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth and Sport awards secondary school students for their achievements in recognized competitions in the country and abroad in physical education and sport. The calendar of the competitions is published for each school year and cover competitions in school, municipal, regional and republic level. The call is opened annually by the ministry of Youth and Sport and the right to the prize have secondary school pupils who have won one of the first three prizes / places in national or internationally recognized physical education or sport competitions.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports regularly announces **public calls** for the submission of proposals for different programmes and projects in the field of sports. A call for a special programme proposals with a defined programme task: "[Increased number of sports and recreational activities for young people](#)" in 2020 intends to increase the offer of sports content through the inclusion of young people in free sports and recreational activities.

- the holder of the programme should design programme activities that will enable young people to engage in free sports and recreational activities in at least five cities in the Republic of Serbia, in sports facilities in public ownership;
- programme activities should include women and people with disabilities;
- programme activities must be implemented in open and closed sports facilities in public ownership;

- programme activities must be organized in at least 15 sports.

Programme activities are determined by the Programme Structure of the Republic Budget for 2020.

In addition, the Ministry of Youth and Sports finances and co-finances youth programmes and projects of public interest through public call. In addition to supporting the implementation of youth volunteer projects and volunteer camps within the Programme Youth Rules (*Mladi su zakon*) (see more on [2.4 Youth volunteering at national level](#)) these public calls support programs and projects aimed at implementing the objectives of the National Youth Strategy.

In this regard, it is possible to propose:

- innovative programmes or projects;
- programmes or projects that represent the continuation of initiated activities from previous programmes or projects;
- programmes or projects modelled on those previously implemented that have given good results.

These proposals must contribute to the achievement strategic goals referring to health and well-being of young people. Funds for programmes and projects are provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, based on the Law on the Budget of the Republic of Serbia.

Physical education in schools

Physical and health education is a mandatory subject in general upper secondary schools, however schools provide curricular and extracurricular sport activities.

Recommended compulsory instruction time of physical and health education in **gymnasiums** is two school hours per week and for four years it is in total of 288 school hours. School hour in Serbia is 45 minutes long. Main thematic areas covered are:

- physical abilities;
- motor skills, sports and sports disciplines;
- physical and health culture.

Choice of sport is given to children; so, based on their abilities and interests, pupils opt for a sport in which they train, improve and develop their creativity throughout the school year. These can be suggested sport branches and other sports for which students show interest. At the beginning of each school year, the teachers' council, at the proposal of the professional council of physical education teachers, determines the sports that the students of that school can choose. Each school is required to provide spatial and other conditions for the realization of at least four sports. Schools can organise some the sports below:

- Handball
- Futsal
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Swimming
- Skating and skiing
- Table tennis

In accordance with its capabilities and conditions, the school may offer:

- Orienteering;
- Rowing;

- Mountain climbing;
- Martial arts;
- Badminton;
- Aerobics;
- Fitness;
- other activities in accordance with spatial possibilities schools and local communities.

Thematic area *physical and health culture* is realized through two topics Physical Education and Health Culture. The main goal of Physical Education is beside encouraging pupils to exercise independently, to explain them the safety rules and principles of exercise and the basic ways of working on the development of motor and functional abilities as well as the preventive effect that physical exercise has on health.

Sports and health is offered as an **optional curricular programme** to the pupils of the first and the second grade of the upper secondary schools. The goal is for the pupils, based on the study of various aspects of healthy living, to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are in the function of preserving and improving the health and culture of physical exercise. Main topics covered are:

- sport and psychoactive substances;
- physical activity and reproductive health;
- proper nutrition and physical exercise in sports and recreation.

And finally, schools can organize sports and recreational activities as optional extracurricular activities in duration of 30-60 school hours per year to include those sports, recreational activities and disciplines that compulsory physical and health education classes cannot include. The aim is:

- coverage of as many pupils as possible with a special physical exercise programme, which together with the general, compulsory programme, forms a unique system of school physical education;
- satisfaction of new and increasingly diverse desires and interests of school youth to engage in various branches of physical exercise in their free time;
- discovering the possibilities of development and creativity in physical culture, sports, gymnastics, games, dance and helping students to comprehensively develop their natural abilities for different types of physical activities;
- Encouraging students to learn how to integrate physical exercise into their daily lives and to develop activity in this area as their permanent need and obligation.

The work consists of:

- sports and recreational activities of informal groups for which the group independently decides (all sports games, table tennis, archery, swimming, etc.);
- trainings and competitions in sports for which pupils independently decide to participate on the basis of desires and predispositions (athletics, exercises, handball, football, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, swimming, etc.);
- entertaining competitions and contests, excursions and other activities for entertainment and leisure; special courses for basic introduction to some branches of physical exercise and sports disciplines, which pupils have not met before or want to deepen their knowledge (wrestling, karate, judo, skating, chess, etc.).

In addition, the school organizes and conducts sports competitions, school sports week as a unique part of the process of teaching physical and health education.

Physical education in vocational secondary schools includes, besides Physical education realized according to the pupils' choice, Sports technical education programme (athletics,

exercises on the equipment and the ground). Vocational secondary schools also organise optional extracurricular activities.

Didactic-methodical guidance for teaching and learning is provided to teachers responsible for physical and health education within the [Bylaw on the gymnasium curriculum](#) and the [Bylaw on the curriculum for common subjects in vocational and art schools](#).

Programmes of continuous professional development are offered to the physical education teachers through the [Catalogue](#) of accredited programmes by [Institute for Improvement of Education](#).

Collaboration and partnerships

[National Youth Strategy](#) supports the development of the extracurricular activities by cooperating with scientific, cultural, sports, technical-technological and other institutions that provide development opportunities to young people.

The [Law on Sports](#) allows that if a school, i.e. a higher education institution does not have the conditions for organizing an independent sports section, it can be realized through school cooperation with an organization in the field of sports.

The Law also envisages joining of sports clubs and organizations into associations and federations.

The [Sports Federation of Serbia](#) is a territorial sports federation for the Republic of Serbia, which includes the competent national branch sports federations, competent national sports federations for sports, national professional and other sports associations, as well as territorial sports federations for the autonomous province, local self-government units and city municipalities.

The Sports Federation of Serbia performs activities that provide conditions for monitoring, development and improvement of sports recreation, children's sports, including physical education of preschool children and school sports, university sports, sports in diaspora and top sports in non-Olympic sports.

[Serbian School Sports Federation](#) is a voluntary, non-governmental, non-political and non-profit association of associated organizations in the field of school sports. The Federation brings together: primary and secondary schools, municipal associations for school sports, associations of physical education teachers and other interested organizations in the field of school sports.

The Federation obtains financial resources to achieve its goals from:

- registration fees;
- membership fees;
- income from its own activities;
- sponsorships;
- donations;
- public revenues;
- economic and other activities;
- revenues of companies, institutions, agencies and other organizations for which the Federation is the founder or co-founder;
- other sources, in accordance with the law.

7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

National strategy(ies)

The [Strategy for Youth Health Development in the Republic of Serbia](#) adopted in 2006, states three main Strategic goals:

- promotion of healthy lifestyles, preservation and improvement of youth health;
- achieving equality of young people in health, regardless of differences according to gender, health status, socio-economic status, ethnic, religious and other affiliation;
- redirecting health care from a clinical approach to health promotion, intersectoral cooperation, community involvement, active youth participation and the development of individual responsibility for health.

Related to this, the expected strategic outcome referring to healthy lifestyles is that at least 50% of young people have adopted healthy lifestyles and benefit from adequate health care services. The prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV infection, childbirth among young adolescents, termination of pregnancy, mental health disorders, suicide or suicide attempts, violent behaviour of young people, abuse of psychoactive substances among young people, especially among vulnerable, marginalized and socially disadvantaged young people are the indicators defined by the Strategy.

Specific strategic goal of the [National Youth Strategy](#) for the period 2015-2025 is **improved health and well-being of young women and men**. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to:

- to improve health promotion and risk prevention programmes for young people to make them available to more young women and men;
- **create conditions for the development of healthy lifestyles of young women and men;**
- improve conditions for working with young people at health risk;
- improve measures for housing and independence of young people;
- develop responsibility of young women and men towards environmental protection.

Ministries in charge of these specific objectives are the ministries in charge of youth, of housing, the ministry in charge of the environment and the ministry in charge of health.

To create conditions for the development of healthy lifestyles of young women and men, the Strategy recognize that policies and programmes for the development of healthy lifestyles of young women and men need to be improved through:

- supporting research on monitoring the lifestyles of young people and analysis of trends according to international standards, which will include a gender perspective;
- establishing a mechanism for cooperation of youth policy entities in the exchange of information and development of guidelines for healthy lifestyle programmes;
- improving public policies for funding healthy lifestyle programmes;
- supporting programmes for the development of healthy lifestyles of young people and their monitoring and evaluation.

Further, within the same strategic goal aims at improved opportunities for young women and men for quality leisure time and participation in sports and recreational activities should be achieved through:

- support to the development and implementation of programmes of youth policy actors for the development of healthy lifestyles;

- supporting and developing programmes of sports sections and other extracurricular activities aimed at the development of health through life skills, with special emphasis on young women;
- improve and develop the system of school competitions and the introduction of a variety of sports disciplines and stimulate the inclusion of all young people, with special reference to young women;
- support the activities of introducing physical education classes in the curricula of higher education institutions;
- support the construction, rehabilitation and adaptation of public spaces and putting into function the quality of leisure time of young people.

The evidence-based [evaluation of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 for the period 2015-2020](#) reports that the Strategic goal "Improvement of the health and well-being of young women and men" had the highest level of fulfilment out of the all strategic goals. The highest percentage of fulfilment of the indicators - 94.01% was achieved in 2019, followed by 83.03% in 2020, 58% in the period from 2015 to 2018 and lastly - 45% in 2018. More details on the National Youth Strategy is provided in [Chapter 1/1.3 National youth strategy](#). An initiative for revision of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 or the development of a new Strategy was launched in 2021, see more about forthcoming policy developments in [Chapter 1/1.9 Current Debates and Reforms](#).

[Decree on the National Health Care Programme for Women, Children and Youth](#) points out adopting healthy lifestyles in adolescents as one of the specific goals in achieving preservation and improvement of the health of adolescents aged 10 to 18, i.e. until the end of secondary school education. The expected results, according to this regulation, are: at least 40% of adolescents who have adopted healthy lifestyles; improved knowledge and greater motility of adolescents, families and the whole society for healthy lifestyles and reduction of various forms of risky behaviour.

The Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia by 2030 ([Strategija razvoja obrazovanja i vaspitanja u Republici Srbiji do 2030. godine](#)) pinpoints, as a part of a broader strategic goal, the development and implementation of training programs for educators at implementing preventive and interventional activities in the field of mental health and prevention of risk behaviour, as well as developing resources for parents and students in the same field.

Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

To develop and practice a healthy lifestyle, develop awareness of the importance of one's own health and safety, the need to nurture and develop physical abilities, as well as prevent violence, drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, the schools in Serbia can organize a **school sports week**. School sports week includes:

- physical activities adapted to the age and abilities of pupils;
- cultural events with the aim of promoting physical exercise, sports and health (art and other exhibitions, folklore, dance, music and sports workshops ...);
- workshops on health, physical exercise, sports, etc ...

Withing a specific goal defined in the [Decree on the National Health Care Programme for Women, Children and Youth - prevention and treatment of obesity and eating disorders](#) it is expected to reduce incidence and prevalence of obesity, obesity and eating disorders among adolescents by 20%; an increase in adolescents who are physically active by 10%. This can be achieved through the following activities.

1. regular monitoring of body weight, body height and body mass index, within the framework of systematic and control examinations;
2. providing conditions and promoting physical activity, especially among girls;

3. adequate monitoring and treatment of adolescents with overweight and obesity should be carried out according to professional and methodological instructions;
4. education of health workers for early detection of eating disorders in girls and boys should be conducted according to professional and methodological instructions;
5. education of adolescents, parents or guardians for early detection of eating disorders is carried out with the aim of detecting eating disorders in the early stages of the disease, in order to start treatment as early as possible;
6. multidisciplinary, gender-sensitive teams for the treatment of eating disorders (pediatrician, nutritionist, endocrinologist, psychiatrist, psychologist) should be organized in order to provide appropriate treatment of adolescents with eating disorders.

Based on the Work Plans of health institutions, health educational work is planned in all organizational units of the health centre based on the analysed needs. Counselling at the **youth health centres** offer health educational activities for adolescents and young people up to the age of 19 in: reproductive health, proper nutrition (combating obesity), prevention of substance abuse and domestic violence, prevention of behavioural disorders, and the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports supports different initiatives and projects to encourage healthy lifestyles among young people. A project "[Active youth for a healthier life: Health, lifestyles and physical fitness of young people](#)" is one such example implemented by the Association for Sports and Sports Medicine Belgrade in cooperation with the Institute for Sports and Sports Medicine of the Republic of Serbia, the Institute for the Evaluation of the Quality of Education and the Centre for Health, Exercise and Sports Sciences and financed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The primary goal of the project was to determine the degree of physical fitness and the prevalence of healthy lifestyles and behaviours among young people. In particular, the relationship between regular physical activity, healthy diet and the degree of physical shape of young people with their health condition. A [research](#) on healthy behaviour patterns in secondary school pupils was conducted. As a final results of the project a [Guide](#) for proper physical exercise, nutrition and the desired degree of physical form in the function of health for high school students was published.

The Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health, with the support of the Ministry of Health, the Cabinet of the Minister without Portfolio in charge of Demography and Population Policy, the Institute of Public Health of Serbia, as well as health and social institutions and local governments [launched the project "My body my rights"](#), which concerns the reproductive health of young Roma women, with the aim of educating, empowering and learning to properly plan a family. In addition to raising the level of information, access to health care, educational materials and contraceptives, the project includes continuous activity of 20 trained peer educators who will support young people in Roma communities and provide them with all necessary assistance and information relevant to sexual and reproductive health.

Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

Health education is integrated in *Physical and health education* (see more on physical education in chapter: **7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity /Physical education in schools**). It is mandatory subject with the total annual instruction time 288 school hours. Main thematic areas covered are:

- physical abilities;
- motor skills, sports and sports disciplines;
- physical and health culture.

Thematic area *physical and health culture* is realized through two topics Physical Education and Health Culture. The main goal of Health Culture is to explain to pupils the general health concept, the importance that physical exercise has for its preservation and the

possible consequences of insufficient physical activity and improper maintenance of personal and collective hygiene. Importance of regular medical examinations, balanced and proper diet are also emphasised. Special attention is given to analysing the consequences that various psychoactive substances have on body (harmfulness of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, excessive use of pharmacological supplements, drugs, etc.).

Peer-to-peer education approaches

[National Youth Strategy](#) supports increased accessibility of programmes of prevention of youth addiction by supporting youth peer education programmes on the prevention of addiction to psychoactive substances, gaming and new media at local level.

Collaboration and partnerships

[National Youth Strategy](#) supports the development of the extracurricular activities by cooperating with scientific, cultural, sports, technical-technological and other institutions that provide development opportunities to young people.

[The Institute of Public Health "Dr Milan Jovanović Batut"](#) together with its [regional institutes](#) continuously work on establishing partnerships and raising the level of a local community involvement and the non-health sector, along with the health sector, in activities aimed at disease prevention and the promotion of healthy lifestyles (more details below).

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

To achieve set goals related to adopting healthy lifestyles among adolescents, the [Decree on the National Health Care Programme for Women, Children and Youth](#) specifies that it is necessary to conduct health promotion aimed at all adolescents, and especially at vulnerable groups and at parents, educators and the general public. Health promotion includes:

- healthy and balanced diet, prevention of obesity and eating disorders;
- promotion of physical activity;
- oral and dental health;
- mental health promotion;
- prevention of risky sexual behaviour, use of tobacco, alcohol and psychoactive substances; prevention of injuries and poisonings, violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation;
- prevention of diseases caused by adverse environmental influences (supply of defective drinking water, unsafe disposal of waste materials, internal and external air pollution, microbiological and chemical malfunction of food).

[The Centre for Health Promotion of the Institute of Public Health "Dr Milan Jovanović Batut"](#) deals with the promotion of community health, health education and health care for vulnerable population groups and groups with special needs based on a multidisciplinary and multisectoral programme approach.

Main activities of the Centre are:

- Coordination, planning, organization and implementation of health promotion activities, which are especially aimed at vulnerable groups of the population (pregnant women, small and preschool children, school children, persons over 65 years of age and persons with disabilities).
- Development, printing and distribution of promotional and educational material within the implementation of national health promotion programmes and marking campaigns from the [Public Health Calendar](#).

- Implementation of health education programmes for the improvement of youth health through coordination and education of teachers and health workers, evaluation and monitoring of health education work in Serbia.

Activities are planned and directed towards:

- promoting positive behaviour to reduce the risk of disease in individuals, groups and the general population;
- establishing partnerships and raising the level of a local community involvement and the non-health sector, along with the health sector, in activities aimed at disease prevention and the promotion of healthy lifestyles;
- prevention of risky behaviour and risk factors;
- health education and information with the participation of the mass media;
- realization of programmes, targeted health related educational contents and measures.

One such activity is development of a manual "[Prevention - reproductive health of young people](#)".

In addition, Serbia has a [network of regional public health institutes](#) and they conduct awareness-raising campaigns and projects in their own regions. One such example is a competition of young constructors, secondary school pupils and university students, organized by the Technical College of Vocational Studies in Subotica "[Dough bridge](#)" in cooperation with the Centre for Health Promotion of the Institute of Public Health Subotica. The goal is to promote health and healthy lifestyles among young people. To include a larger number of students in promotional activities, cooperation was established with the student parliament and the Ecological Club of the Technical College of Vocational Studies in Subotica. The idea is that students within their curricula and exercises in informatics design and give ideas and interesting proposals for the prevention of certain behavioural risk factors that can endanger health of young people (use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, risky sexual behaviour ...) .

The Institute of Public Health of Serbia "Dr Milan Jovanović Batut" with a network of regional institutes every year prepares the celebration of different significant dates:

- World Food Day - October 16
- International Day of Physical Activity - May 10
- World Mental Health Day - 10 October

Besides different activities with local schools, lectures, tribunes, exhibitions on the relevant topics are being organized.

7.5 Mental health

National strategy(ies)

In 2007, a Strategy of developing mental health care was adopted and in 2019, a Programme on mental health protection was developed based on some of the then statements, but still current:

- mental health is still often seen as a low priority,
- the dominant culture of neglect and exclusion of people with mental disabilities persists.

The Strategy is not aimed solely on youth, rather on general population.

[National Youth Strategy](#) for the period 2015-2025 targets mental health of young people in the 4th strategic goal -_Improved health and well-being of young women and men through increased availability of youth programmes for the preservation of mental and general health. This should be achieved by:

- supporting education programmes for youth, parents and teachers on the improvement of mental and general health of youth.
- Developing counselling offices offering mental health services and psychological support and help outside of health facilities.

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 has not undergone any revisions/updates since its adoption. One evidence-based evaluation of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy have been conducted. The [evaluation](#) was for the implementation period 2015-2017. The evaluation showed that within the specific goal increased availability of youth programmes for the preservation of mental and general health planned activities are somewhat realized.

Expected result	Activity	Percentage of completion
Increased availability of youth programmes for the preservation of mental and general health	Support education programmes for young people, parents and teachers to improve mental and general youth health	70%
	Develop mental health counselling and psychological support and outside services health institutions in cooperation with the youth offices	60%
Source: Youth National Strategy Action Plan Evaluation 2015-2017		

Similar, the [Strategy for Youth Health Development in the Republic of Serbia](#) (2006) states three tasks related to mental health of young people :

- establishing new stationary units for mental health problems of young people;
- strengthening, programme and territorial defining of existing units for mental health of young people;
- developing programmes for strengthening of self-confidence, communication and negotiation skills in line with the development the potential of young people with mental health disorders, chronic diseases and the need for special support.

Improving the mental health of young people

[Programme on mental health protection in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2019-2026 year](#) is a harmonized system of measures, conditions and instruments of public policy. The programme predicts reform of the mental health care system in the Republic of Serbia and improvement of human rights of persons with mental disorders. It is aimed at general population, but young people (15-24) are recognized as particularly vulnerable population that needs:

- more comprehensive preventive activities, primarily early diagnostics, as well as comprehensive assistance to children and young people and their families, at the level of primary health care. Primary prevention of mental disorders of children and youth as well as improvement of their mental health should also be implemented through the education system and forms of mass communication;
- additional continuous education of existing staff in health centres
- empowerment and assistance to existing health care institutions at the secondary and tertiary level
- introducing norms for work in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry;

- within the future centres for mental health in the community, form sub-units for mental health for children and young people and connect them with existing development counselling centres and youth counselling centres;
- develop services for twenty-four-hour admission of emergencies in children and adolescents psychiatry in several institutions that have the capacity and resources for this activity;
- expand the list of diagnostic categories in the field of mental childhood disorders and provide better access to psychopharmacotherapy for children and adolescents with mental health problems, from the budget;
- improve cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach in order to enable adequate treatment of children and adolescents with behavioural disorders and chronic aggressive behaviour.

The programme envisages the procedures and software programmes for patient registration and monitoring in all mental health services, with direct cooperation between the services as well as cross-sectoral cooperation.

In the implementation of the Programme, the Ministry of Health cooperates with all partners from the health system, as well as to all other partners outside the health care system, which are marked in the Action Plan as holders of individual activities.

Funds necessary for the implementation of measures and activities contained in the Action Plan for the implementation of this programme will be provided from the budget of the Republic of Serbia in accordance with the limits set by the Ministry of Finance.

The [Decree on the National Health Care Programme for Women, Children and Youth](#) for early detection and adequate care of adolescents with mental health problems suggest the inclusion of mental health information in primary and secondary school curricula. Work on increasing the motivation of the adolescents to seek help and start treatment in a timely manner, as well as destigmatization of those seeking help or assistance are also activities proposed by the Programme.

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

Policy framework

The [Decree on the National Health Care Programme for Women, Children and Youth](#) specifies the importance of early detection. The Programme defines that the systematic examinations, planned interviews and control examinations with a coverage of 95% are performed to monitor growth, development, health status, adolescent behaviour, early detection of health disorders, signs of neglect and abuse, as well as to conduct health promotion.

Systematic and control examinations and planned interviews are conducted according to the expert-methodological instructions for the implementation of this programme.

The programme defines the importance of early detection is several specific areas:

- Prevention and treatment of obesity and eating disorders.
- Protection and improvement of adolescent reproductive health.
- Early detection, adequate treatment and appropriate support for adolescents with chronic diseases and disabilities.
- Prevention of the use and abuse of tobacco, alcohol and illegal psychoactive substances, adequate treatment of adolescents who abuse or are addicted to psychoactive substances (PAS), reducing the effects of the use of PAS.

- Early detection and adequate care of adolescents with mental health problems.
- Prevention of violence, neglect and abuse, mitigation of violence, neglect and abuse, prevention of injuries and poisoning.

In all these areas education of health workers, adolescents, parents or legal guardians for early detection education is seen as an important step in prevention.

Health care for young people after coming of age, prevention of health disorders and early detection of diseases should be conducted through targeted preventive examinations at least every other year for all young people aged 19 to 26 which include an adapted, friendly tone, thematic conversation that should motivate young people to improve and preserve their health.

Stakeholders

Although the health sector has a key role in the promotion, prevention and protection of health, other sectors, such as education, social protection, culture, science, legal system, financing, also have a significant impact on health sector. By establishing mechanisms of cooperation and partnership with associations, conditions are created to provide children and young people with a safe and stimulating environment for development and growing up.

The health care services for women, children and youth should be oriented towards local self-government, and to make their activities available and ensure their implementation outside health care institutions. This includes organizing lectures, seminars, forums and workshops in schools and kindergartens, clubs and associations, in public places, in unhygienic settlements, as well as public events in order to promote health. Local self-government is represented by political decision-makers, educational institutions, centres for social work, public media, associations that work with vulnerable groups.

Guidance to stakeholders

There is no particular guidance for stakeholders.

Target groups

The youth population groups covered by the Programme are: youth to adulthood; young after reaching the age of 26. Vulnerable groups should have priority in the process of planning and organizing health services for women, children and youth.

Vulnerable groups include: the poor, the Roma population, children with disabilities, children at risk and with developmental disabilities, abused and neglected children, children without parental care placed in institutions, mothers and children from rural areas, children who have dropped out of school - "street children and adolescents", as well as refugees and internally displaced persons, single mothers and mothers exposed to violence, minors and other mothers who cannot take care of themselves and their own offspring.

Funding

The funds needed for the implementation of the Programme will be provided from the budget of the Republic of Serbia. Funds intended for the implementation of the Programme will be determined each year depending on the dynamics of use of funds and planned activities for the current year.

7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

The [Strategy for Youth Health Development in the Republic of Serbia](#) (2006) stress out that the health care system for young people should be territorially and content-wise accessible and inclined to young people, with full implementation of health promotion,

team work development and intersectoral cooperation, active participation of young people and local community engagement.

The [Decree on the National Health Care Programme for Women, Children and Youth](#) specifies the importance of the organizations of health services to be adapted to the needs of adolescents. The Programme presupposes increased access to health services for all adolescents; increased adolescent confidence in health services and increased use of health services. To achieve this, it is possible for:

- adolescent representatives to participate in commissions dealing with planning, organization, implementation control and assessment of health care that is in line with the needs of young people;
- establishment of accessible health care for all adolescents, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, geographical area;
- education of health workers and health associates who provide health care to adolescents for a youth-friendly approach;
- establishing mechanisms for cooperation between health institutions and various associations with the aim of expanding the network of institutions and organizations that contribute to health and provide quality health services for all adolescents.

The Ministry of Health initiated the project of **youth-friendly health services within** the primary health services system with the support of international donors (savetovalista za mlade). Health care for young people is provided by youth health centres (primary centres). Counselling for young people (aged 10 to 19) has been set up in 40 of these institutions, with trained specialist paediatricians, gynaecologists, general medical doctors, psychologists, social workers and visiting nurses. Counselling centres are open every day and implement health educational activities for adolescents and young people up to the age of 19 related to: growth, development, nutrition, physical activity, smoking, use of alcohol and illegal psychoactive substances, violence, abuse, chronic diseases; safety, safe sex and contraception. Both group health-educational work and individual counselling work is applied.

According to the [Child Health Care System of Serbia Analysis](#), adolescents with mental health problems are referred to these youth counselling service and most interventions are completed here. If problems are beyond the level of competence of the staff employed in the centres, children and adolescents can be referred to local social services, specialized clinics, and departments for mental health care of children and adolescents within large hospitals (secondary health care). From here, when the problems are beyond the scope of secondary health care, children are directed toward tertiary health care. These are specialized departments for child and adolescent mental health care at university clinics. Most of the diagnostic procedures and treatment of children and adolescents with serious mental health problems take place at the tertiary health care level, clinics, institutes, and specialized hospitals in major cities.

7.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Beginning of the school year 2020/2021 takes place in the conditions of the declared epidemic infectious disease on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, and these circumstances require a specific way of organizing educational work. In this regard, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development has issued a series of professional instructions relating to the implementation and realization of educational work and the engagement of employees in schools.

Ongoing debates

New national strategy on sports development is being discussed by the multi-sectoral working group which has over 30 members, representatives of ministries, competent institutions, international organizations, the civil sector and the media. The Strategy is to be adopted for the period of 10 years from 2020-2030 and should define priority areas, namely: development of sports for children and youth, including school sports; increasing the citizens' participation in sports through the development and improvement of recreation sports; development and promotion of top sports and development and improvement of sports infrastructure.

8. CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

Providing young people with cultural activities outside of school, in Serbia is in general a municipal responsibility. The government supports the sector through co-financing different projects and programmes. There have been changes in formal education curricula and several non-government organisations and networks have become recognisable as high quality non-formal education providers in the field of cultural industries with the content tailored for youth. Even though research reports show that youth do not participate enough in creation and consumption of cultural content, some improvements can be noticed in comparison to the previous years.

8.1 General context

Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation

The Ministry of Youth and Sport has been conducting regular annual [Survey on Position and Needs of Youth of the Republic of Serbia](#) since 2008 aiming to analyse the status, challenges, attitudes on social issues that young people share in Serbia in different areas, including culture. The last Survey on Position and Needs of Youth in the Republic of Serbia was carried out in 2019.

Even though some improvement is noticeable in the latest research, findings show that youth do not participate enough in the creation of cultural contents, and that the culture offer for youth is not evenly geographically distributed. [Survey on Position and Needs of Youth of the Republic of Serbia](#) from 2016 shows that, viewed from the regional aspect, significant differences exist between Belgrade and Central Serbia in terms of the offer of cultural contents. Unlike previous years, it is noted that a larger number of young people believe that there is enough available content for young people in their environment than those who think that there is not enough content. Until 2019, the prevailing opinion was that there was not enough cultural content for young people - 66% in 2016, 61% in 2017 and 67% in 2018. In 2019 this percentage is 52%. On the other hand, while about a third of respondents in previous research cycles thought that there was enough cultural content, now this share is growing to 58%.

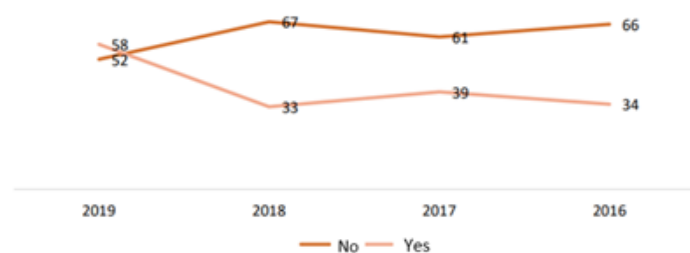


Figure 8.1.1: Is there enough available cultural content for young people in your area?
Comparison of 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, in%

Source: *Survey on Position and Needs of Youth of the Republic of Serbia, 2019*

Young people share the opinion that public space for spending free time of young people exists in their local community (a total of 74%), 18% do not know, and 8% say that such space does not exist in their local environment. Among those who say that there is a space for young people in the local environment, 42% of them believe that there is not enough space, while every third respondent (32%) believes that the existing space is sufficient for their needs.

Serbian youth is not homogenous in terms of cultural consumption and production. Among the biggest obstacles to their participation in cultural activities listed by the respondents, those that stand out are the lack of money and unfavourable geographical circumstances. As indicated in the [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#), a study of social background of youth revealed that a very important prerequisite for the involvement of youth in cultural and creative activities was their household income - the higher the income in their household, the greater the degree of their involvement in culture. In addition, young people from more favourable social backgrounds, whose parents are highly educated, youth residing in urban areas, university students and young experts are at the forefront of the cultural scene in Serbia. The [Survey on Position and Needs of Youth of the Republic of Serbia](#) from 2019 further reveals that writing, painting and playing an instrument are the least popular activities among Serbian youth as 44% of young people say that they never do it in their free time. Writing, painting and playing an instrument are collectively regularly or often practiced by 20% of respondents, and visits to theatres, cinemas, concerts are collectively practiced regularly or often only by 28% of young people.

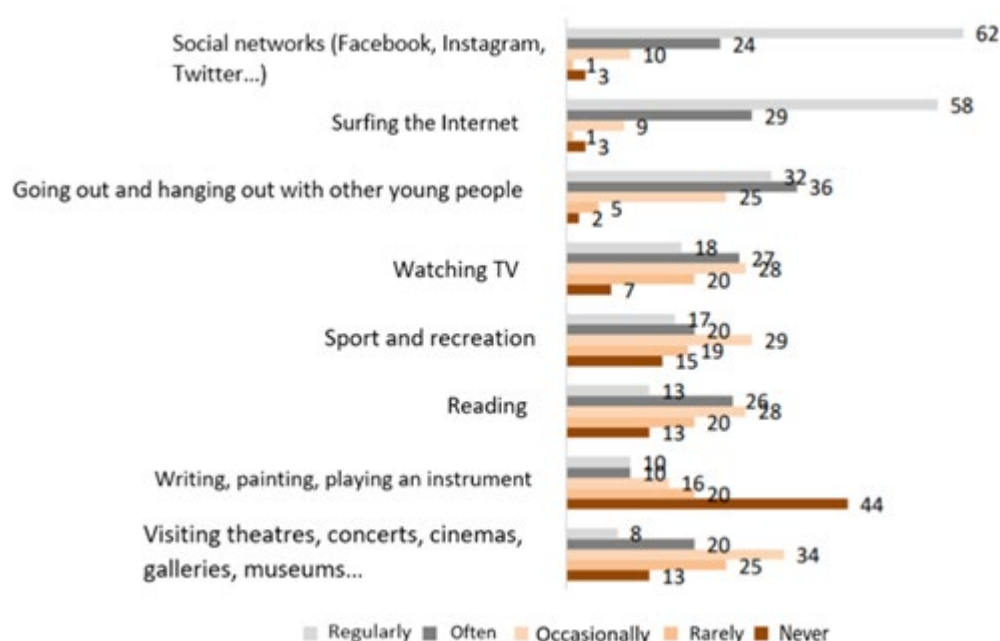


Figure 8.1.2: In which of the following ways do you spend your free time and how often do you practice these activities? 2019, in%

Source: *Survey on Position and Needs of Youth of the Republic of Serbia, 2019*

The most common form of spending free time is surfing the Internet, on social networks, and going out and hanging out with other young people. Thus, a total of 86% of young people spend time on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) regularly or often (of which 62% regularly); a total of 87% surf the internet regularly or frequently, and

68% of them regularly or frequently go out and socialize. 18% of young people watch television regularly and another 27% do that often. 13% of young people read regularly, and another 26% say they read often.

Besides this, a research by the [Centre for Studies in Cultural Development \(CSCD\)](#) have addressed the cultural needs of young people. Namely, the largest number of high school students in the Republic of Serbia read only recommended school reading books, very rarely go to theatres, museums, galleries and similar. Although almost half (49.5%) of young people (15–29 years) point out that there are three to five hours of free time during the day, only 9.3% visiting cultural facilities ranks among the three favourite activities to complete it.

Main concepts

The [Culture Development Strategy 2020 -2029](#) defines contemporary art as artistic and cultural creativity in the fields of literature and publishing, music, fine arts, applied arts, visual arts, design and architecture, theatre, film art and other audio-visual creations, art dances (classical ballet, folk dances, contemporary dances), digital creation and multimedia, and other forms of performing cultural programmes and content (musical, pantomime, circus, street art, etc.).

8.2 Administration and governance

Governance

National cultural policy is created at the national level and implemented at the levels of the republic, province and local self-government.

Main actors

The [Ministry of Culture and Information](#) is responsible for development and promotion of culture and artistic creation, and the protection and preservation of cultural heritage. Care about the promotion of contemporary creativity and cultural creativity of socially vulnerable groups (national minorities, persons with disabilities, children and youth, etc.), as well as interethnic cultural cooperation is placed within the **Sector for Contemporary Creativity and Creative Industries**.

The [National Council for Culture](#) is formed as an expert-advisory body, in order to provide constant professional support in the preservation, development and dissemination of culture. The members of the Council are elected from among eminent and well-known artists and cultural experts, for a period of five years. The activities and tasks of the Council are:

- analyses and gives an opinion on the situation in culture in the Republic of Serbia;
- gives suggestions on creating cultural policy;
- make proposals for the development and improvement of cultural activities;
- considers and gives an opinion on the proposal of the strategy for the development of culture and gives an assessment of the implementation;
- propose criteria for acquiring the status of a prominent artist, i.e. a prominent expert in culture;
- give an opinion in the procedure of awarding a prize for encouraging cultural creativity;
- gives suggestions and proposals for the regulation of other issues in the field of culture as well as interdepartmental cooperation (science, education, urbanism, international cooperation, etc.);

General distribution of responsibilities

Certain responsibilities in the field of culture are transferred to the level of regional, provincial and local authorities and have a separate budget for these purposes.

The [Law on Culture](#) defines the types of subjects in culture and states that cultural activities can be performed by cultural institutions, cultural associations, artists, associates, i.e. cultural experts, as well as other subjects in culture. A number of cultural institutions are relatively well distributed across the country, in the sense that every city and municipality have at least some space where citizens can enjoy culture.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

According to Article 20 of the [Law on Local Self-Government](#) of the Republic of Serbia, local self-government units (cities and municipalities) are the founders of cultural institutions on their territory and provide working conditions, organize activities related to the protection of cultural goods of importance to the city or municipality and provide funds for financing and co-financing programmes and projects in the field of culture. Also, according to Article 4 of the [Law on Culture](#), local self-government units take care of meeting the needs of citizens in culture on their territory and regulate certain issues of interest to their citizens, as well as the manner of their realization within the rights and obligations determined by the Constitution and the law.

Cross-sectoral approach is also achieved through development, implementation and monitoring of the both National Youth Strategy and its Action Plans and [Culture Development Strategy](#). To achieve set goal, responsible ministries share responsibilities with other authorities responsible for culture, the ministry responsible for education, the ministry responsible for information and media, local self-governments.

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 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. Representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Information are among other members of the Council. More on cross-sectoral approach between the ministries can be read in [Chapter 1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries](#).

8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people

Existence of a national strategy

In February 2020, the Government of Serbia adopted the [Culture Development Strategy from 2020 to 2029](#) (Strategija razvoja kulture Republike Srbije od 2020. do 2029. godine) with an Action Plan. The strategy systematically regulates the public interest in the field of culture and determines the strategic priorities of its development in the stated ten-year period.

Children and young people are recognized as the most important segment in the development of cultural needs, because they are not only visitors to the event, but also future audiences and creators in culture. The Strategy implies it is very important to involve young people in creating cultural content.

The ninth strategic goal of the [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) (Nacionalna strategija za mlade za period 2015-2025) is dedicated to the **consumption of culture and**

participation of youth in the creation of cultural programmes. More details on National Youth Strategy is provided in [Chapter 1.3 National youth strategy](#).

Scope and contents

The general goal of the [Culture Development Strategy](#) is to improve the role of culture in the life of the citizens of the Republic of Serbia, and as special goals are stated:

- improvement of the regulatory framework, institutional capacities and financing system;
- development of an investment system in cultural institutions and protection of cultural heritage;
- production development, cultural needs and equal participation of citizens in cultural life;
- promotion of international cooperation and the process of European integration in the field of culture;
- digitalization in culture.

The Action Plan for the implementation of the Culture Development Strategy has been developed for the medium-term period from 2020 to 2022. It envisages:

- well-thought-out legislative activity and responsible personnel policy;
- a commitment to protect and nurture national culture;
- protection of cultural rights of national minorities and other vulnerable social groups and promotion of mutual understanding.

Also, the Action Plan implies wide accessibility of culture and equal participation in cultural life; development of cultural needs of citizens, especially children and youth, particularly through the media; protection and valuation of cultural heritage as a non-renewable and unique heritage, encouragement and promotion of artistic creation as a free expression of the human spirit; active participation in international cultural exchange and contribution to the country's reputation in the world; modern models of financing and understanding of culture as a significant economic potential.

[National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) dedicated 9th strategic goal to the consumption of culture and participation of youth in the creation of cultural programmes. Specific goals are:

- provided continuous support to the creativity of young people and youth participation in the creation and consumption of cultural programmes;
- increased use of cultural content among young people.

As implied by the Strategy, the government intends to support programmes that promote the cultural and creative potential of young people both in formal and non-formal education setting, and in this way to ensure better access for participation of young people in enriching the cultural offer. Increasing the scope, diversity and quality of cultural offer is restated also as a priority at the level of local communities and diverse actors in the system.

In February 2020, the Government adopted the [Smart Specialization Strategy](#) from 2020 to 2027 (Strategija pametne specijalizacije od 2020-2027). This Strategy is an important instrument for improving the innovation and research ecosystem in Serbia, as well as for the development of a knowledge and innovation economy. Creative industry is recognised as one of the priority areas of development. It is seen as an increasingly important part of Serbian economy expansion.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

The [Culture Development Strategy](#) was proposed by the [Ministry of Culture and Information](#) but other responsible ministries and institutions are envisaged to participate in implementation of activities planned by the action plan. Among others these are: [Institute for Improvement of Education](#), the [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#), educational institutions, textbook publishers etc.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) is the Ministry of Youth and Sports, however other authorities with whom the ministry will share responsibility in carrying out the activities are the ministry responsible for culture, the ministry responsible for education, the ministry responsible for information and media and local self-governments.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, as the holder of the Strategy, will be the responsible institution and the main body responsible for monitoring and implementation of the [Smart Specialization Strategy](#). The working body of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Public Policy Secretariat and the ministries responsible of the Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation would be in charge for coordinating and monitoring the Strategy.

Revisions/updates

As the [Culture Development Strategy](#) is newly adopted, no evaluation nor revisions have been conducted.

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 has not undergone any revisions/updates since its adoption. There have been one evidence-based evaluations of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy have been conducted. The [evaluation](#) was for the implementation period 2015-2017.

The evaluation showed that within the specific goal "provided continuous support to the creativity of young people and youth participation in the creation and consumption of cultural programmes" most of the planned activities were successfully realized, while with the expected result two, according to the data, the planned activities were not realized.

Expected result	Activity	Percentage of completion
Supported programmes that enhance the cultural and creative potential of young people	Support the development of creative and cultural youth clubs in educational institutions	95%
	Recognize and improve programmes that encourage creativity in young people at local level and enable cooperation with others environments	85%
	Provide support for cultural activities of young people within informal initiatives and associations that implement youth activities	70%
	Develop training programmes for young people for self-employment through association in art and culture activities	50%
Cultural institutions involve young people in the preparation and implementation of their content	Introduce special periods for young creators within the programme of cultural institutions free of charge	30%
	Develop valued internship programmes for young people in cultural institutions during regular schooling and study	0%
Systemic support provided for the realization of cultural participation of young people	Provide support to cultural institutions in work on involving young people in creation of content and use of cultural content	50%
	Support recognition and provide systemic support for the creative youth industries and cultural entrepreneurship	95%
	To enable the use of public spaces of associations that carry out youth activities in the field of culture and art at the local level	100%

Source: [Youth National Strategy Action Plan Evaluation 2015-2017](#)

Within the second specific goal "Increased use of cultural content among young people" more than half of the planned activities were successfully implemented.

Expected result	Activity	Percentage of completion
Improved adaptation and accessibility of cultural content to young people	Provide support to programmes that involve young people in the process of adaptation of cultural content to young people	70%
	Support the training programmes for employees in cultural institutions on modern ways and means of presenting cultural events tailored to young people	50%
	Improve the cooperation of cultural and educational institutions to increase the number of young people who use cultural content	70%
Increased share of content about culture and creative industries for young people in the media	Provide support for the development of online providers of cultural participation of young people	60%
	Support the promotion of cultural participation among young people in all types of media, with the emphasis on creative youth as positive role models	70%
	Improve contents related to culture and creative industries within the educational programme of public services	70%

Source: *Youth National Strategy Action Plan Evaluation 2015-2017*

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development will be responsible for evaluation and monitoring of the [Smart Specialization Strategy](#). It will be in charge of submitting annual reports to the Government on the results of the implementation of the Action Plan. The first monitoring report is planned at the beginning of 2021. Interim evaluation will be conducted by the expert body in 2023 to harmonize the evaluation cycle with the EU Member States.

8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation

Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

Young people can benefit from initiatives aimed at facilitating young people's access to cultural environments and fostering their participation in cultural events and experiences.

The project "[European Youth Card - the path to European opportunities](#)" implemented by the European Youth Centre and funded by the Ministry of Youth and Sports aims to encourage youth mobility through numerous services, discounts and benefits in Serbia and abroad. The idea is to enable youth to explore the world they live in and be informed about the events and to actively and fully participate in social life. Several [types of cards](#) are available for young people, students, upper secondary school pupils and teachers.

EYCA – European Youth Card is intended for all young people between the age of 7 and 30, regardless of whether they are pupils, students, employed or unemployed.

- 24h UNIQA insurance and travel insurance for an unlimited number of trips during the validity of the membership fee;

- discounts in Serbia and other European countries. Discounts apply to buying tickets for museums, theatres, bus and train tickets, accommodation in hotels and hostels, visits to restaurants, shopping for clothes and other needs of young people in various retail chains and on trips;
- gifts throughout the year at promotions and through social networks;
- participation in various thematic calls and events for young people.

ISIC – International Student Identity Card is intended for students who have certificate of enrolment in studies issued by faculty or college in bachelor, postgraduate or PhD studies. It serves as an internationally recognized student ID. With this card different discounts are also enabled in different areas: for the museum tickets, theatres, tickets for bus and rail traffic, accommodation in hotels and hostels, visits to catering facilities, the purchase of wardrobe and other needs of young people in different chains of commerce and on travel services.

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

As presented in the research study [Youth Cultural Participation in the Balkans](#) young people in the Western Balkans countries are most often informed about the cultural events via Internet. Even so, there is no unique web portal(s) either directly organised or funded by top level authorities on informing young people about cultural opportunities in Serbia.

The same research study showed that “word of mouth” in information transfer is quite significant as about a quarter of respondents rely on this type of obtaining information.

Observed comparatively Internet is the most popular medium, while print and TV media have lower popularity among young people (Figure 4).

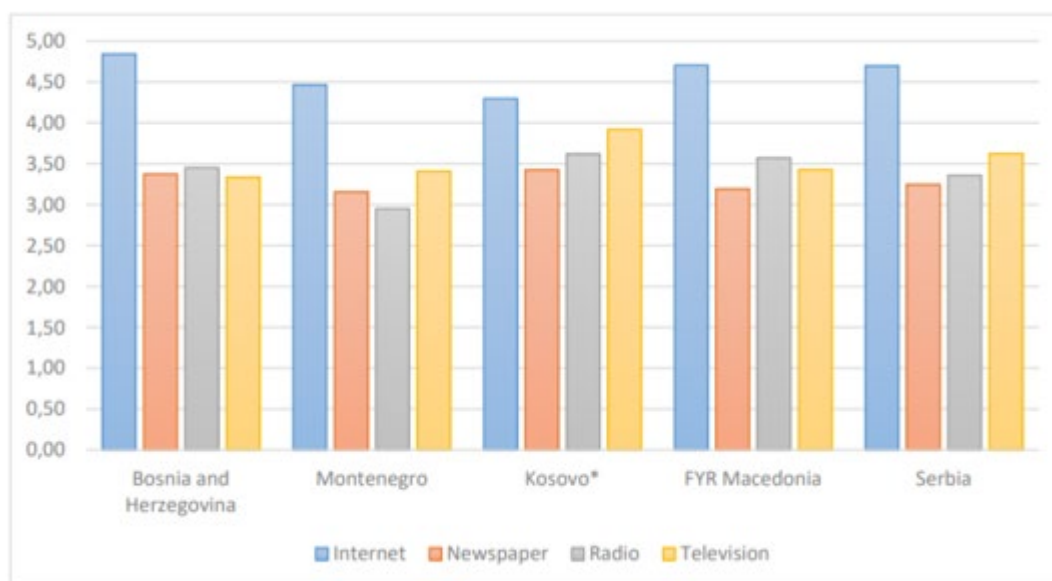


Figure 8.4.1: Ways of informing about cultural events

Source: *Youth Cultural Participation in the Balkans*, 2017.

As the Internet being the most popular medium, the most widespread ways of communication and information shows that Facebook, Instagram and Viber are most popular in the region, while Skype, Twitter and Google + are less popular.

Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

Within the process of raising public awareness about the importance and value of heritage, events such as [European Heritage Days](#), Museums from 10 to 10, [Museum Night](#) are held and realized throughout Serbia.

The "European Heritage Days" event is part of a large European event of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, which every September presents heritage as a common heritage of the European nations, diversity of cultures, traditions and customs.

Every year, in cooperation with the secretariats in charge of culture, environmental protection, education and childcare, sports and youth, many programmes are prepared in each of these areas. Special attention is paid to acquainting children and young people with the importance of heritage, the possibilities of sustainable use and preservation. As young people are especially interested in the application of modern technologies in cultural heritage, numerous contents in digital form are also being prepared (virtual tours, exhibitions and catalogues in electronic form, films, video materials, TV shows, recorded performances, etc.).

8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

In terms of formal education, cultural and creative competences in Serbia can be acquired through general, vocational secondary education and higher education.

In general education, as well as in vocational upper secondary education, **Music** and **Art education** are taught as two mandatory, separate subjects. The goal of learning *music education* is to develop pupils' awareness of the importance and role of music art through the development of civilization and society, to encourage pupils' creative and critical thinking, to develop aesthetic criteria to form a responsible attitude towards preserving music heritage and culture as well as further professional and personal development. The goal of learning *art education* is to develop communication skills and to develop creativity and a responsible attitude towards preserving the culture and artistic heritage.

Moreover, in general upper secondary schools, pupils can opt for the optional subject **Art and design**. The programme is interdisciplinary, outcome-based and thematically created. Pupils can choose it throughout their secondary school education. It is realized within groups composed of pupils from different classes and the interdisciplinary nature of the programme implies the joint work of teachers of different subjects.

The aim is that the pupil through art research and creative work develops sensitivity to aesthetics, creativity, curiosity and motivation to create and expression in different media, as well to form the habit of continuous involvement in artistic and cultural life of the community.

Topics are processed through research and projects, which means that there is no pre-defined scenario of activities. The programme is realized through activities that pupils can implement in school as well as outside. Topics covered:

- Inspiration
 - works of art as inspiration;
 - nature as inspiration;
 - fashion trends;
 - styles in art.
- Unified art
 - spectacle;
 - musicals;
 - art of advertising;

- art projects in Serbia;

In 4 general upper secondary schools as of school year 2020/21, specialized departments/classes for creative industries have been introduced. Specialized departments for creative industries - **performing and audio-visual arts** are intended for gifted pupils in these areas. By attending this programme, pupils develop creative thinking with the application of new technologies and a responsible attitude towards the preservation of cultural heritage. This programme will provide students with creative space and support in acquiring basic knowledge and skills in the fields of theatre disciplines, media, film art, various audio-visual forms, video games, the Internet, as well as the structure of artistic professions in these areas in accordance with a continuous process of technology and digitalization development. Mandatory art-related subjects are:

- Fine art – with 144 recommended annual school hours;
- Music art - with 144 recommended annual school hours;
- Performing art - with 531 recommended annual school hours;
- Audio-visual art - with 531 recommended annual school hours

For admission to these classes, pupils need to pass the entrance exam and it includes a general culture test based on pupils' knowledge of the Serbian language, music, fine art and history. The number of students is 20 but most of the teaching of art subjects takes place in smaller groups of a maximum of 10 pupils.

In upper secondary education, **art schools**, such as music and ballet schools can be mixed schools with both art and general education subjects. Alternatively, pupils may enrol in an art school and another general or vocational secondary school at the same time. Educational profiles in four-year musical education are:

1. Music performer of classical music
2. A jazz music performer
3. Music performer of Serbian traditional singing and playing
4. Music performer of church music, Orthodox direction
5. Music performer of church music, Catholic and Protestant direction
6. Early music performer
7. Music Associate
8. Sound designer

In ballet school pupils can choose among classical ballet, contemporary dance and folk dance. Besides music and ballet schools, there are experimental programmes for several vocational educational profiles: stylist associate, dramatic art associate, restoration and conservation technician.

Cultural and art education is offered by [a number](#) of higher education institutions in Serbia. These can be **universities** and **colleges** that are either **public or private**, offering study programmes at bachelor, master and doctoral levels. Heritage, music, fine and applied arts, cultural management and film are defined as the most represented cultural fields.

In terms of **non-formal learning** cultural and creative competences in Serbia can be acquired through different initiatives and programmes organized by civil society organisations or formal education providers. According to the [UNESCO Culture for Development Indicators \(CDIS\)- Country Technical Report](#), trainings and courses are mostly held in the field of management in culture, music, dramatic and visual arts and photography by various organizations in the public and civil sector, and universities through summer schools and career development centres or centres for professional education.

Special attention is paid to the preparations for the introduction of drama education in schools and the preparation of teachers for drama education, which is usually done by non-governmental organizations: [Centre for Drama in Education and Art - CEDEUM](#), [Bazaart](#), [Dah Theater](#) and others.

Trainings and courses in the field of heritage, conservation and restoration for employees in culture and for the public are organized by the [Central Institute for Conservation](#).

Management and marketing seminars in culture are led by the [Independent Culture Scene of Serbia](#), the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Management and Cultural Policy, and sporadically by other actors (within the design of the [Nova Iskra incubator](#), [Creative Mentorship](#), some festivals and events, summer schools, etc.). In the last few years, trainings in the field of international cultural cooperation, cultural diplomacy and cultural tourism, entrepreneurship, fundraising and preparation for participation in international projects have been held sporadically.

As mentioned below, in [Providing quality access to creative environments](#), the Ministry of Culture and Information announces an [annual call](#) for financing or co-financing projects in the field of contemporary art in the Republic of Serbia.

Among 12 area priorities, 11th priority refers to cultural activities of children and activities for children and youth. Under this priority projects that contribute to the development of cultural needs and strengthen the capacity of children and youth and youth organizations can be funded. These can be projects of education in the field of culture, encouraging the application of new technologies in culture, networking, encouraging young talents, projects that encourage research and creative thinking, projects that motivate artists to work with young people, cultural activities in the framework of spending free time etc.

Minimum amount to be financed or co-financed per project: 250,000.00 dinars in 2020.

Specialised training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields

Besides initial education offered by higher education institutions in Serbia, programmes of continuous professional development are offered to the teachers through the [Catalogue](#) of accredited programmes by the [Institute for Improvement of Education](#) for both compulsory and [optional art](#) subjects.

Didactic-methodical guidance for teaching and learning is provided to teachers responsible for art education within the [Bylaw on the gymnasium curriculum](#) and the [Bylaw on the curriculum for common subjects in vocational and art schools](#). Moreover, each curriculum contains a didactic-methodical instruction which, together with general instruction, gives a teacher a complete picture of the nature of a specific optional programme and its realization.

[European Film Factory](#) is a new online free educational film platform for pupils and teachers created by the [French Institute](#) in collaboration with [Arte Education](#) (an educational branch of the French-German channel Arte) and [European Schoolnet](#) - a network of 34 ministries of education in Europe where Serbia is included as an observer country. The platform is intended for pupils aged 11 to 18 and their teachers. It is possible to watch 10 European films completely free of charge and create educational materials with the help of various tools, together with pupils.

This platform provides the possibility of connecting with other users, as well as exchanging created materials and ideas for work and processing. The aim of this platform is to introduce children to the seventh art, to teach them to read social, psychological and cultural phenomena through film, as well as to sensitize them to European similarities and differences.

Providing quality access to creative environments

The Ministry of Culture and Information announces an [annual call](#) for financing or co-financing projects in the field of contemporary art in the Republic of Serbia. The call should provide financial support to cultural programmes and projects that contribute to the realization of the general interest in the field of culture.

The call is announced for programmes and projects in the following areas of culture:

- literature (creation, translation);
- music (creation, production, interpretation);
- fine, applied, visual arts, design and architecture;
- theatre art (creation, production and interpretation);
- artistic dance - classic ballet, folk dance, contemporary dance (creation, production and interpretation);
- film art and other audio-visual creations;
- digital creation and multimedia.

In addition, the call opens for programmes and projects in the field cultural activities of children and for children and young people.

Among 12 area priorities, 11th priority refers to cultural activities of children and activities for children and youth. Under this priority participatory projects ideas are especially supported. These are projects:

- in which children and young people have an active role, participate in their creation and implementation;
- projects that enable the availability of cultural content of programmes of cultural institutions dedicated to children and youth, innovative projects and projects that contribute to creating conditions for the development of children's creativity and education in all areas of art and cultural development);
- projects dealing with children and youth at risk (violence prevention, street children, children without parental care, victims of human trafficking, asylum seekers).

Minimum amount to be financed or co-financed per project: 250,000.00 dinars in 2020. In 2019, 81 such projects were funded with the total amount of RSD 21,350,000.00.

In addition, the Ministry of Youth and Sports finances and co-finances youth programmes and projects of public interest through [public call](#). In addition to supporting the implementation of youth volunteer projects and volunteer camps within the Programme Youth Rules ([Mladi su zakon](#)) (see more on [2.4 Youth volunteering at national level](#)) these public calls support programmes and projects aimed at implementing the objectives of the National Youth Strategy.

In this regard, it is possible to propose:

- innovative programmes or projects;
- programmes or projects that represent the continuation of initiated activities from previous programmes or projects;
- programmes or projects modelled on those previously implemented that have given good results.

These proposals must contribute to the achievement strategic goals referring to the culture and creativity of young people. Funds for programmes and projects are provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, based on the Law on the Budget of the Republic of Serbia.

8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture

Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities

In formal education, entrepreneurship is recognized as an important both cross-curricular and key competence. Thus, within the subjects presented in more detail in section [8.5. Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training](#) entrepreneurship is recognized both as a key competence for lifelong learning - **a sense**

of initiative and entrepreneurship and as general, cross-curricular competence - **orientation towards entrepreneurship**.

Besides formal education, entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities can be acquired through the participation in the world's largest entrepreneurial education programme - [Junior Achievement](#). Implemented activities are related to entrepreneurship, experiential learning, the development of skills that contribute to employability, economic and financial literacy, innovation and creativity. Unique educational methods have been developed, based on the partnership of local and international companies and agencies, with the aim of helping students acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.

[Fund for Young Talents](#) under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, among others, has a task is to provide awards to secondary school students for their achievements in recognized competitions in the country and abroad. The calendar of the competitions is published for each school year and cover competitions in school, municipal, regional and republic level related to school subjects. Some of them especially target creative skills, such are for example:

- competitions of secondary vocational and art schools pupils in the categories of design and classical art media;
- Student short film review – FILMić;
- General upper secondary schools theatre encounters etc.

Serbia is also participating in [Creative Europe](#) programme. Creative Europe Desk is carried out by two offices: MEDIA desk Serbia established within the Film Centre of Serbia and the Culture desk Serbia established within the Ministry of Culture and Information. The programme supports:

- Cooperation between cultural and creative organizations from different countries;
- Initiatives to translate and promote literary works by European authors in the European Union and beyond;
- Establishment of networks that enable competitiveness and international activity of the cultural and creative sector;
- Establishment of platforms for the promotion of young talents and their works and projects.

Between 2014 and 2019, 84 cultural organisations from Serbia took part in cooperation projects.

Non-formal education is offered by many organisations in the fields of youth and or culture. One such example is [Nova Iskra Design Incubator](#) that offers educational programmes and projects in the field of creativity, innovation and socially responsible design, next to services and training programmes in the field of creative businesses. The incubator supports young designers from different areas and works and cooperates with many private and public institutions, as well as with network of over 250 creative individuals from Southeast Europe and all collaborators are part of one of three different membership networks.

Designers' Lab – a network of designers of different profiles is designed to support young creative people at the beginning of their careers and in need of professional workspace to exchange experiences and meet with potential clients and industry representatives. As an example Nova Iskra's programme [Excite 2.0 – Creative Exchange](#) can be added. The focus of the programme was especially on the domain of cultural and creative industries, with the aim of exchanging knowledge and new entrepreneurial ideas and innovations. The project was supported by the [European exchange programme for Young Entrepreneurs](#) and the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia. The exchanges provided a chance for young entrepreneurs from Serbia to realize study visits and exchange experiences with companies and entrepreneurs in the field of cultural and creative industries.

Creative Hub is the widest community of over 250 creative professionals from various disciplines - from web design or coding, through designing products and services, to interior design, architecture, visual communication, branding, packaging design and interactive content development.

Industry Hub gathers SMEs in the fields of business and manufacturing. In cooperation with the members, it organizes training programmes, study visits for designers, and professional exchange, and thus helps local companies pave their way to international markets.

Mikser House is a multidisciplinary platform that encourages the development of creative economy in Serbia. It connects cultural, educational, and commercial activities in a multifunctional space. It offers a wide range of cultural activities - exhibitions, lectures, promotions, concerts, panel discussions, workshops, festivals, theatre performances and educational programmes, in collaboration with various partners. Although this platform supports the development of entrepreneurship in the creative industries, it however does not include financial aid.

Additional forms of non-formal education are mentioned in the section [8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences](#).

Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

Decade of Entrepreneurship is a set of governmental measures not directly focused on youth, however it does bring together various initiatives, measures and projects aimed at developing the entrepreneurial spirit among young people: trainings, professional development, retraining and employment support, as well as professional and consulting assistance to improve business. *Entrepreneurship Portal* is developed within the Decade of Entrepreneurship. It is administered by the Ministry of Economy provides information on:

- support programmes 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 list of subprogrammes offered on the portal indicates that entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors are supported through [the incentive grants](#) to film industry.

Creative Industries Cluster of Vojvodina was established in Novi Sad as a business association, with the aim of influencing the creation of conducive environment for the development of creative industries in Vojvodina and the region. The main activities include:

- Business development education;
- Connecting and business cooperation;
- New product development;
- Connecting with other industries and new markets;
- Information and assistance for applying for additional sources of financing (subsidies, loans, etc.).

The founders and members of the cluster are public and educational institutions, entrepreneurs, SMEs, companies and individuals, artists and creators from the creative industries. The Cluster organises a programme of competitions for the development of entrepreneurship and the participation of entrepreneurs from Serbia in international competitions - [Serbia Start Up](#). Two sub-programmes refer to creative industries:

Creative Block - a series of meetups for the creative industries entrepreneurs. This activity gathers creators at thematic meetings to exchange experiences, identify problems

they face in their work, and introduce them to the entrepreneurial way of thinking, acting and planning how to turn their creativity into a successful carrier.

Creative Business Cup – a national as well as an international competition of creative entrepreneurs from over 70 countries worldwide. The competition is an opportunity for creative entrepreneurs and teams to increase business knowledge, get promoted by this global platform and increase the chances to improve or start a business based on creative ideas. The national competition for Serbia includes the search for the best creative business concept that will represent Serbia at the international finals in Copenhagen, Denmark.

8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

Development of ICT infrastructure in education institutions is an ongoing, continuous process of education modernization. In 2016, primary and secondary schools became members of Academic network of Republic of Serbia - [AMRES](#). This network oversees building, development and management of educational, scientific and research computer network in Serbia. The AMRES has, in cooperation with the [Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications](#) and the [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#), launched a project called "*Development of ICT infrastructure in educational, scientific and cultural institutions*". The goal was for all primary and secondary schools in Serbia to get safe Internet access through the Network. In relation to the commercial internet connection, the advantage of this connection is the ability to block sites with harmful and inappropriate content and all other unwanted pages. The Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications has implemented a project to expand the number of [Eduroam](#) access points educational institutions. This service in Serbia is provided by AMRES by providing free access to secure internet at over 19,500 locations within universities, institutes, schools, libraries, etc.

To reduce the digital gap in rural areas, at the beginning of 2017, a project was launched to introduce a wireless WiFi network in schools in rural areas of Serbia. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and Microsoft. The construction of wireless local computer networks in schools was started together with AMRES at the beginning of 2019, and this pilot project covered 33 primary and secondary schools in the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

According to the [Digital Inclusion Report in the Republic of Serbia 2014 to 2018](#), about 2,900 primary schools received computer rooms through the "Digital School" project in the period from 2010 to 2013. This trend continued in the following years.

A lot has been done in terms of infrastructure and policy in the past years as described above and in Chapter [6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media](#). Knowledge of basic digital competencies, programming and computer problem solving have become an integral part of the curriculum in schools at all levels of education. Having this in mind, creative use of new technologies is highly emphasised in art-related curricula described in section [8.5 Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training](#). Thus, the curriculum for specialized classes for creative industries - **performing and audio-visual arts** is leaning heavily on modern technology and therefore is necessary to use electronic textbooks in teaching and learning and to publish pupils' work on the school website as well as on platforms formed for the needs of work.

As mentioned in [Ch 8.5 - Providing quality access to creative environments](#), the Ministry of Culture and Information announces an [annual call](#) for financing or co-financing projects in the field of contemporary art in the Republic of Serbia. The call provides financial support to cultural programmes that among other things, **encourage the**

application of new technologies in culture. One of the areas of culture for which the funds can be obtain is the digital creation and multimedia.

Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

The [Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications](#) encourages the development of the information society through programmes and projects under the common slogan "[Smart and Safe](#)". The aim of these activities is to educate and raise awareness of the need for prompt, proper and targeted involvement of citizens, the education system and the economy in modern digital streams. Within this initiative information and communication technologies in education, science and culture is singled out as a separate area of activities. In this regards, the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications supported the project of connecting 19 key cultural institutions to the academic Network of the Republic of Serbia - [AMRES](#), as well as equipping the [Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts](#) to raise its digital capacities.

The goal of these projects is continuous investment in the information and communication infrastructure of cultural and scientific institutions, in order to enable better work, creation of new services for the audience, more adequate access to younger generations and creation of attractive and interactive contents in the field of cultural heritage and art as well as from the field of contemporary creativity and science.

The [Cultural Heritage Browser of Serbia](#) has been initiated by the Ministry of Culture and Media with the strategic support of Microsoft Serbia with the aim of presenting to the general public including young people, a variety of digitized collections and to provide information on heritage held by libraries, archives, museums, galleries, institutes for the protection of monuments and other cultural entities.

Through this browser it is possible to get credible information about the searched keyword. The data collection mechanism is based on unique software solutions used in museums, galleries, institutes for the protection of monuments, archives, libraries and other cultural entities dealing with cultural heritage. As a reliable source of information, it contributes to the scientific research, education, promotion of cultural heritage and cultural activities in general.

8.8 Synergies and partnerships

Synergies between public policies and programmes

Within the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its youth sector, a smaller internal units - **Group for cooperation with associations and youth offices** deals among other things with:

- creating conditions for the establishment and operation of youth offices;
- monitoring youth policy and the work of youth offices at the local level;
- support for young people for active participation in the local community;
- monitoring the implementation of programmes of youth organizations and associations and local self-government units;
- collection and consolidation of measurable data on youth on the basis of monitoring the implementation of programmes and projects implemented in local self-government units, which are aimed at young people, as well as their continuous updating;
- preparation of analyzes on the effects of programmes and projects implemented by associations and offices for youth and reporting on them;
- analyzing and checking financial reports on the implementation of funded programmes and projects implemented by associations, youth offices and local self-government units in the field of youth;

- keeping a single record of youth associations, youth associations and their associations;
- encouraging young people to organize and associate and to participate in social flows;
- capacity building of youth associations and youth offices; preparation of publications in the field of youth policy;
- support for the development of various youth services at the local level;
- cooperation with associations and offices for young people in organizing international events and gatherings in coordination with the Sector for International Cooperation and European Integration;
- encouraging non-formal education of young people etc.

Through the [Fund for Young Talents](#), synergies are created between education system and youth organisation in field of culture who are organizing competitions related to school art-related subjects.

Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers

In 2019, the city of Novi Sad took the title of the [European Youth Capital](#). With [OPENS19 Programme](#) Novi Sad created more opportunities for youth by youth, empowered them to become pro-active initiators of positive changes, introduced innovative ideas not only in Novi Sad, but also at national and international level. Young people and youth organisations created more opportunities in terms of employment, education, free time, culture, healthy lifestyle and network with the rest of Europe. In May 2018, the Government of the Republic of Serbia declared OPENS (Youth Capital of Europe Novi Sad) a project of national importance.

Furthermore, the city of Novi Sad took the title of [European Capital of Culture in 2021](#), when it will be available for the first time to cities and countries outside the European Union. The project "[Novi Sad 2021](#)" was designed as a platform for the development of cultural and creative potentials of the City, which in the coming years will aim to strengthen the cultural vitality, enable urban regeneration and improve the international reputation and tourist offer of Novi Sad. In this way, the City of Novi Sad will develop its local concept and strategy for sustainable development of the cultural sector with a focus on: strengthening cultural institutions, renewing cultural heritage, strengthening cultural participation, developing cultural and creative industries, decentralization and cross-sectoral cooperation.

The specific focus of one of the program pillars is on children and young people. The goal of the platform in this segment is promotion and development of children's creativity and the creativity of young artists, as well as the networking of Novi Sad and Europe through cultural exchange of children and youth. Thus, the realization of a whole series of cultural infrastructure projects has started. One of such examples is the reconstruction of „Chinese Quarter“, within which a space specially intended for youth was reconstructed - Youth creative polis. The project was supported by the '[Novi Sad 2021](#)' [Foundation](#) and [OPENS](#), representative of art production, representative of craftsmen from the "Chinese Quarter", as well as representatives of the City Administration for Culture, City Administration for Building Land and Investments, City Administration for Public Services and Utilities, and City Administration for Urban Planning and Construction Works.

8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities

As mentioned in [Ch 8.5 - Providing quality access to creative environments](#), the Ministry of Culture and Information announces an [annual call](#) for financing or co-financing

projects in the field of contemporary art in the Republic of Serbia. The call defines 12 priorities and two of them are particularly aimed at financing projects fostering equality in cultural activities of national minorities and persons with a disability. This granting scheme is not limited only to youth, but is open to this group in addition to the general population.

Priority 9: cultural activities of national minorities in Serbia

- These are the projects that contribute to strengthening the capacity of cultural entities. These can be the project for the improvement and modernization of work, contribution to the professionalization of minority culture, cooperation with professional institutions and individuals, encouragement of professional and scientific research in culture;
- Projects that enable the availability of cultural content (intended for a wider circle of users, and not only for members of minorities or only for members of the majority people, e.g. translation of a publication, subtitling of a film, dubbing of a theatre play);
- Projects of cooperation, networking, co-production, guest appearances in the country and the region (home countries).

Minimum amount to be financed or co-financed per project is RSD 120,000.00 in 2020. In 2019, 127 of these projects were funded with total allocated amount of RSD 16,558,000.00.

Priority 10: Cultural activities of persons with disabilities

- Projects that contribute to strengthening the capacity of cultural entities (professionalization of staff of organizations of persons with disabilities; cooperation with professional institutions, organizations and individuals; education of employees in cultural institutions for the needs of persons with disabilities; sensitization of visitors - audience);
- Projects that enable the availability of cultural content - accessibility of cultural content and programmes of cultural institutions (translation, subtitling, dubbing, info boards in Braille, etc.);
- Projects with clearly profiled target groups of persons with disabilities;
- Projects that ensure participation.

Minimum amount to be financed or co-financed per project is RSD 100,000.00 in 2020. In 2019, 29 of these projects were funded with total allocated amount of RSD 6,901,000.00.

Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

Respect for the cultural and democratic values of local, national, regional, European and world traditions is guaranteed by the [Law on Culture](#). In addition, the creativity of national minorities is seen in the [Culture Development Strategy](#) as a special value in nationally mixed environments that contributes to the diversity of culture and the promotion of dialogue and tolerance in society.

[The Social Inclusion and poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia](#) is the **main governmental authority** responsible for social inclusion and poverty reduction in Serbia. It was established in 2009 by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The Unit so far did not include explicitly activities in which discrimination and inclusion are tackled through culture/cultural activities but they are not excluded either.

The Unit has been implementing the project "Support to the Improvement of Social Inclusion in the Republic of Serbia" since 2009. In January 2018, the implementation of the third phase of this project began, which is being implemented with the support of the Government of Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The general goal of the third phase of the project is to contribute to greater social inclusion of vulnerable social groups and active participation of all relevant actors to ensure a better quality of life for all.

The activities carried out within the project should contribute to:

- Relevant national and local institutions more effectively apply selected principles of good governance (with emphasis on participation, equality and non-discrimination) in achieving social inclusion priorities in accordance with international standards, in areas of public policy related to social inclusion (social protection, education, health, employment and housing);
- institutions at the local level better respond to the needs of poor and socially excluded citizens;
- people in a state of social exclusion (especially women, youth, Roma, migrants and people with disabilities, especially in rural and extremely poor areas) are empowered through the support of the environment to use quality, integrated and inclusive social protection, education, employment services, health care and housing.

8.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 [evaluation report](#) states that it is necessary in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and other state bodies to conduct a more detailed analysis of the causes of public policy failures in the area of youth participation in cultural activities and in the coming period through a wider repertoire of activities to make greater efforts to support creativity and increase the use of cultural content among young people.

In its Action plan, the [Smart Specialization Strategy 2020 -2027](#) predicts developing a master programme for connecting arts and information technologies. This measure entails funding a multi-disciplinary three-semester master's programme in ICT, coding, data analysis, organisational sciences, and the arts, with at least one short course in each of these disciplines. This programme would meet the needs of the creative industry by introducing new university courses. It is envisaged to develop the course in 2021.

Ongoing debates

Not available at the moment.

9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

Empowering young people to participate in discussions regarding social issues is recognized as an integral part of national policy. The importance of education for sustainable development has been identified by the education system and aligned changes have been made.

In addition to the governmental bodies, NGOs and international organisation play an important role in advocating and campaigning for global issues as well as in motivating and educating young people in Serbia.

9.1 General context

Main concepts

The [National Strategy of Sustainable Development for the period 2009 - 2017](#) (Nacionalna strategija održivog razvoja) defines sustainable development as a goal-oriented, long-term, continuous, comprehensive and synergistic process that affects all aspects of life (economic, social, environmental and institutional) at all levels. Sustainable development implies the development of models that meet the socio-economic needs and interests of

citizens in a quality manner, and at the same time eliminate or significantly reduce the impacts that threaten or harm the environment and natural resources.

One of the most important goals of sustainable development, as defined by the Strategy, is to create new jobs and reduce the unemployment rate, as well as reduce gender and social inequality of marginalized groups, encourage employment of young people and people with disabilities, as well as other risk groups.

Youth interest in global issues

According to the [Alternative report on the position and needs of young people in the Republic of Serbia, 2019](#), a vast majority of respondents do not know what [Structural Dialogue](#) is, while four fifth of young people have heard about sustainable development and a about a half heard about sustainable development goals. The research also questioned youth attitudes towards sustainable development:

Statement	Mean*
Economic development is not a necessary condition for achieving sustainable development	2.3
Working to improve people's health and well-being contributes to sustainable development	4.1
The generations living today need to make sure that the next generations live better	4.5
A necessary precondition for sustainable development is that people reduce the production of all types of waste	4.2
To achieve sustainable development, it is not important that all citizens regularly participate in elections	2.6
Respecting human rights in society is a necessary condition for achieving sustainable development	4.3
It is not necessary to further tighten the laws to protect the environment	1.9
To achieve sustainable development, it is not necessary for everyone to have access to quality education	2.0
All citizens should be taught how to live in a sustainable way	4.1
Foreign companies operating in Serbia should offer jobs to Serbian citizens under the same conditions as employees in their home countries	4.3
It is possible to eradicate poverty and hunger in Serbia by 2030	2.3

* Likert scale 1-5

Source: [Alternative report on the position and needs of young people in the Republic of Serbia, 2019](#)

As concluded in the report, the findings are encouraging, however, they indicate the need for more active promotion of the 2030 Agenda and sustainable development goals for young people, primarily by the Interdepartmental Working Group for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, UN agencies in Serbia, educational institutions and civil society dealing with youth.

9.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Within the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#), the [Sector for International Cooperation and European Integration](#) among other things, carries out the tasks related to:

- coordination of international cooperation in the field of youth sector and sports;
- participation in the monitoring and implementation of international agreements and conventions, international bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes in the field of youth and sports;

- processes in the field of European integration of the Republic of Serbia;
- harmonization of domestic regulations in the field of youth policy and sports with the European;
- providing support to youth and sports organizations and associations in activities at the international level, especially in the processes related to IPA projects and other international funds;
- preparation of proposed platforms for international agreements;
- encouraging international cooperation within the scope of work of the Ministry;
- preparation of participation of representatives of the Ministry in international gatherings; analyzing the effects and potential of the Ministry through international cooperation etc.

The Sector has its own internal units:

- Group for IPA projects and international funds;
- Group for International Cooperation and European Integration

While *Group for IPA projects and international funds* is dealing mainly with planning and preparation of projects financed from EU pre-accession funds and other international funds in the field of youth and sports, the *Group for International Cooperation and European Integration* among other responsibilities is in charge of:

- participation in coordinating the activities of cooperation of youth and sports organizations with international youth and sports organizations and other international entities;
- compiling information, analysis and reports in the field of international youth and sports policy; cooperation with bodies and structures for youth and sports at the world and European level; preparation of proposed platforms for international negotiations;
- participation in the monitoring and implementation of international conventions in the field of youth policy and sports;
- drafting protocols on cooperation etc.

The main task [the Youth Council](#) (see Glossary) established within the Ministry of Youth and Sports, as an advisory body of the Government is to stimulate and harmonize activities related to the development and implementation of youth policy proposing measures for its improvement, as well as for harmonizing and coordinating intersectoral coordination at the national level. It ensures that the needs of young people are reflected in the policies and enables youth participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of public policies.

The [National Youth Council of Serbia - KOMS](#) is the highest representative body of the young population. It is an alliance of 108 youth associations and for young people, which serves as an advocacy platform for the improving the position of young people and acts as a link between young people, their member organizations and various decision-makers and providers of youth programmes and services. It implements four programme areas:

- Local programme
- National programme
- International programme
- Capacity building programme

The actions are directed through six thematic units:

- Active participation of young people
- Information and media literacy

- Youth employability
- Youth safety
- Education
- Social inclusion, equality and inclusive society

Since 2019, KOMS especially recognizes the topic of sustainable development as an additional programme unit.

The international programme area integrates KOMS into the European youth policy framework through engagement in the [European Youth Forum](#) and [bilateral cooperation](#) with umbrella organizations from other countries with the aim of exchanging experiences and transferring elements of models that have shown good results. Also, by activities in the region through the [Regional Office for Youth Cooperation \(RYCO\)](#), KOMS takes an active part in connecting young people and developing platforms for cooperation between organizations in the Western Balkans. In addition, KOMS has developed a model proposal for the establishment of the "UN Young Delegates" programme, which provided quality and transparent mechanisms for the selection of young people from Serbia to participate in the UN events.

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. Through this body young people can actively participate in decision-making process.

[Foundation Tempus](#) acting as an Erasmus plus National Agency provides opportunity for young people to take part in the Youth Dialogue projects through the Erasmus+ Programme [Key Action 3](#) to promote the active participation of young people in democratic life and stimulate debate between young people and policy makers relevant to young people.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

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.

As mentioned above, the **Youth Council** as the governmental advisory body is responsible for cross-sectoral collaborative work.

The **Local Youth Council** 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.)

The **United Nations** together with its partners work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Nineteen UN agencies, funds and programmes work together through the implementation of the [Development Partnership Framework 2016-2020](#) signed by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the United Nations Country Team in Serbia.

9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues

Global issues exchange with policy-makers at the domestic level

As mentioned in [9.2/Governance](#) Youth Council as well as Local Youth councils enable young people to represent youth and for youth organisations and associations and to participate in the procedures and processes of official decision making by the government representatives.

The most important [KOMS'](#) initiative related to youth dialogue is the development, promotion and maintenance of the digital platform [Structural Dialogue](#). 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.

At the initiative of the representatives of the cities and municipalities in Serbia, in 2016 the [Youth Network of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities \(SCTM\)](#) was formed. The SCTM Youth Network is a mechanism that enables local governments to compare with each other and find out in which areas of work and in what way they can improve the quality of their services. Also, the Network is an effective mechanism for creating and evaluating youth policy, both at the local and national level. The members of the Network are representatives of cities, municipalities and city municipalities employed in activities related to youth policy, primarily employees in youth offices, as well as members of working bodies, i.e. representatives of youth policy development mechanisms in the local community.

Within its scope, the Network is in charge of:

- considering issues of concrete application of international and national regulations that partially or completely regulate youth policy issues;
- considering issues of effectiveness of various forms of institutional support, giving proposals and models in order to improve the work of employees in the field of youth policy;
- considering issues of introduction, improvement and implementation of local policies from the aspect of measures and programs implemented by local self-government units;
- exchanging opinions and information between representatives of local self-government, provincial and national bodies aimed at supporting youth to improve or preserve the quality of life;
- exchanging experiences, knowledge and best practices to establish a standardization of practices that adequately responds to the needs of the local community in creating local youth policies, their implementation and monitoring;
- monitoring and collecting information and data from specific areas.

[Youth Rights Talks](#) are events organised by the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights in cooperation with the United Nations Human Rights Team. The events themes build on the Sustainable Development Goals, defined in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The events serve to establish a dialogue with young people from all over Serbia, state representatives, media, youth organizations, and civil society organizations, as well as influencers and other significant actors in society. The theme of 2020 event is the right to health, i.e. the right to physical and mental health. The event from 2019 gathered about 200 young people from all over Serbia, youth workers, trainers, educators, influencers, decision makers and other actors who discussed social justice and equality, as well as sustainable peace.

From March to April 2019, as a process of developing [Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Serbia on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), the UNICEF lead a consultative process with the youth on SDGs. The consultations included youth panels with the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Equality, and a Public Call through social networks addressed to the youth, civil society organisations and schools, to express their views in a specifically designed online survey: U-Report. The youth used the opportunity to provide their views on SDGs and the progress made in their achievement.

Global issues exchange with policy-makers at the international level

The [National Youth Council of Serbia - KOMS](#)' bilateral cooperation includes the work on establishing and maintaining contacts with other entities and umbrella organizations of young people in other European countries, as well as on the exchange of experiences, examples of good practice and mutual support in their work. Since 2015 exchanges of knowledge and experiences were organized with Slovakia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Germany, with the umbrella organizations of Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Poland, Norway, Greece, Azerbaijan through a series of meetings and study visits.

Since 2012 The KOMS is a member of the [European Youth Forum](#). Through Forum KOMS advocates many things relevant to Serbian context - recognition of youth work, non-formal education, the rights of volunteers and the like.

The goal of the [UN Youth Delegates](#) programme is to encourage the inclusion of more young people in state policy and social obligations, through the expression of youth interests through the role of youth representative in the state delegation to the UN, as well as continuous training of new young leaders for change. The status of young delegates is at the level of youth advisors, and they are being prepared in consultation with youth policy actors and in dialogue with peers across the country and through participation in various events. Their role is realized in three phases:

- preparation;
- participation in the General Assembly Committee and in youth gatherings in the UN system;
- reporting, exchange of experience and preparation of the election of the next delegates.

The main reasons for the establishment of this programme in Serbia, as well as its goals are:

- that young people from Serbia get involved at the international level in finding solutions to issues that concern them;
- that young people from Serbia improve the debate with their ideas and strengthen communication and cooperation between young people and the Government;
- that young delegates upon their return help youth policy actors to find solutions to the problems of young people in Serbia;
- to promote the participation and activism of young people in society, including UN youth programmes;
- to establish a systematic and structured approach to the selection of young people participating in events in the UN system.

The proposed programme is in line with the principles of the National Youth Strategy, and in particular regarding the active participation of young people and the provision of conditions for participation in decision-making processes through a sustainable institutional framework.

The Joint UN Regional Programme "[Dialogue for the Future: Promoting Dialogue and Social Cohesion in and Between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia](#)" is implemented by UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO, with the support of the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Through this programme among others, primary and secondary schools, faculties, cultural institutions, research institutes, tourism and development organisations of local governments can participate through cross-border projects. The aim is:

- Youth capacity building,
- Improving media and information literacy and media reporting,

- Improving dialogue and action for common good,
- Strengthening education system to achieve social cohesion,
- Improving gender equality,
- Promoting cultural diversity and intercultural understanding,
- Environmental Protection.

In 2019, twelve dialogue platforms were organised in all three countries as a part of the Joint Regional Programme, gathering over 1,200 adolescents, young people, civil society representatives, youth and women's organisations, public institutions, media outlets, teachers and the private sector. Platforms helped identify challenges in the field of social cohesion and recommended joint activities to address the identified challenges/priorities.

[The United Nations Association of Serbia](#) is the national coordinator of the global Dialogue Café Association and is implementing the project "Dialogue Café Network in Serbia" established with the support of [the UN Resident Coordinator Office](#) and the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#). As part of the global project [Dialogue Café](#), the network enables young people and other interested parties to communicate and participate in global exchange with participants in other Dialogue Cafes around the world (Lisbon, Evora, Rio de Janeiro, Praia, Novi Pazar, Paris, Cleveland, Wroclaw, London, Amsterdam, Ramallah,...).

[Western Balkans Youth Cooperation Platform](#) is a regional youth platform implemented by [Cooperation and Development Institute \(CDI\)](#), together with the umbrella youth organizations of the six Western Balkans Countries including the [National Youth Council of Serbia - KOMS](#). The aim of the platform is to promote youth connectivity in the Balkans by offering a tailor-made space for youngsters from the region where they meet, plan, organise, implement and voice up their action.

9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

Formal, non-formal and informal learning

In formal education, global issues are covered on all education levels across different curricula. Secondary education covers these problems across varied subjects, especially geography, biology, sociology, psychology, citizenship education, history. However, subjects of sociology and citizenship education focus on these topics more than other subjects.

Sociology is thought as a mandatory subject in general upper secondary education in fourth grade with 66 annual recommended school hours for natural sciences stream and 99 annual recommended school hours for social sciences and 70 hours in four-years vocational secondary schools. Covered topics referring to global issues are:

- social change and social conflicts;
- globalization and transition;
- population and environmental problems;
- city and settlements;
- work and economic aspects of society;
- politics;
- nations and nationalism;
- religion.

Civil liberties and human rights are covered by a mandatory subject **Constitution and citizens' rights** in secondary vocational schools is thought 30 school hours a year.

Compulsory optional subject in both general and vocational upper secondary schools, **Citizenship education** is taught in all grades with total of 144 school hours for all four years. Pupils can choose this subject every year against religious education. Main topics covered by this subjects are:

- globalization;
- human rights, citizens and democracy;
- peace and threats to peace;
- economic and social rights;
- the right to a healthy environment.

In general upper secondary education additional, offered optional subject that cover global issues are:

- **Education for sustainable development**
- **Fundamentals of geopolitics**
- **Religions and civilizations**

Pupils can choose two offered optional subjects in each grade. The optional subjects count total of 428 school hours in four years.

Vocational secondary schools are increasingly introducing new subjects and educational profiles that deal specifically with environmental protection in a specific field of work. Thus, for example, in addition to the educational profile of eco-sanitary technician in medical schools, a new profile was introduced - a technician for environmental protection in the field of chemistry, non-metals and graphics. Contents related to environmental protection are integrated into subjects such as Biology, Chemistry, Ecology and Environmental Protection, Disinfection and Pest Control, etc.

Study programmes covering global issues are offered by a number of higher education institution in Serbia. These can be either public or private universities or colleges offering study programmes at bachelor, master and doctoral levels.

In terms of **non-formal learning** knowledge on global issues in Serbia can be acquired through different initiatives and programmes organized by civil society organisations, formal education providers or international organisations like the [Center for the Promotion of Science \(CPN\)](#), the [Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia](#), [Young Researchers of Serbia](#), [Petnica Research Station](#), [Belgrade Open School](#), [GIZ](#) and others.

The [Fund for Young Talents](#) under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Youth and Sport, among others, provides awards to secondary school students for their achievements in recognized competitions in the country and abroad. The calendar of the competitions is published for each school year and cover competitions in school, municipal, regional and republic level related to school subjects. Some of them especially target global issues, such as competitions in sociology or National Ecological Olympiad.

The [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#) conducts the annual [Call](#) for the allocation of funds to encourage programmes of public interest that are important for education and implemented by associations.

A total of 53 associations received financial support in 2019 and 33 projects were financed in the field of **education for sustainable development**. Total value of the approved funds was RSD 5,719,000.00 or 65% of the total available funds.

The [Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia](#), organises educational programmes for students realized through:

- thematic lectures;
- presentations and workshops on nature protection in the premises of the Institute;

- visiting of professional associates of the Institute at lectures on nature protection at faculties;
- Participation of professional associates of the Institute in student eco-research camps and field teaching;
- realization of professional practice of students at the Institute;
- Participation of students in nature protection actions implemented by the Institute in cooperation with civil society organizations;
- thematic forums, discussion groups and round tables;
- Participation of students in the promotional activities of the Institute at festivals, fairs, etc.

The largest number of programmes is realized for students of Biology, Forestry, Geography, Pharmacy and the Faculty of Security Studies of the University of Belgrade, as well as the Faculty of Applied Ecology FUTURA.

Through a project in the field of climate change implemented by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, with the technical support of the UN Development Programme and the financial support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) an interactive textbook on climate change called "[Climate Box](#)" is being translated and prepared for children and young people in Serbia. The box will be translated into Serbian with local examples and presentations of real conditions and thus adjusted to the needs of the domestic education system. The adaptation of the "Climate Box" also includes training for lecturers in the field of biology, geography, physics, and environmental protection.

Within the project "[Strengthening the capacity for improved implementation of multilateral agreements in the field of environmental protection](#)" funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in cooperation with institutions of the Republic of Serbia, [guidelines](#) for youth organizations and local youth offices for planning projects in the field of environmental protection was developed. The purpose of the guidelines is to bring the field of environment closer to the subjects of youth policy and to refer to current topics in this field.

Educators' support

Besides initial education offered by higher education institutions in Serbia, programmes of continuous professional development are provided to teachers through the [Catalogue](#) of accredited programmes by the [Institute for Improvement of Education](#). Didactic-methodical guidance for teaching and learning is developed for teachers responsible for subjects dealing with global issues within the [Bylaw on the gymnasium curriculum](#) and the [Bylaw on the curriculum for common subjects in vocational and art schools](#). Moreover, each curriculum contains a didactic-methodical instruction which, together with general instruction, gives a teacher a complete picture of the nature of a specific optional programme and its realization.

Within the concept of **Science Education for a Responsible Society**, the [Centre for the Promotion of Science \(CPN\)](#) has developed a programme for teachers whose main goal is to create an environment for learning and discovering science. The Centre is a public institution, established in 2010 by the former Ministry of Science with the task of promoting science and technology. In accordance with its mandate, the Center implements programmes and activities working with research and educational institutions in Serbia and around the world, and closely cooperates with the republic ministries, media and the private sector. As the national contact point of the largest European network of science teachers - Scientix, the idea is to connect teachers, their practices and experiences, as well as to promote STEM disciplines (see Glossary), new pedagogical approaches, cooperation and project financing through various European funds. During 2017 and 2018, more than 40 events with this programme were held in Belgrade and about twenty cities

and smaller places throughout Serbia. Many of these events were dedicated to the climate change issues and environmental protection.

Training of teachers, upper secondary pupils and students in new techniques, methods and contents in various scientific disciplines is also performed within the [Petnica Research Station](#), an independent organization that deals with the development of scientific culture, scientific literacy, education and culture. Petnica's programmes cover a wide range of fields and disciplines within the natural, social and technical sciences, including the fields of ecology, environment, as well as the concept of sustainable development.

[Global Education Guidelines](#), a pedagogical handbook developed by the [North-South Center of the Council of Europe](#) in consultation with the [Global Education Network](#) was translated to Serbian as a support for educators and policy creators. It serves as a guide for understanding and practicing global education, in formal and non-formal education contexts.

Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues

In general, in Serbia key initiatives in disseminating information on global issues are mostly carried out by the civil society sector occasionally with the support of relevant public institutions or ministries. Even though information usually targets all citizens, some campaigns are designed exclusively for young people.

As part of the the Youth Rules Programme ([Mladi su zakon](#)) (described in more details in Chapters [2.4 Youth volunteering at national level](#) and [9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption](#)), call for youth project ideas was launched in 2020 under the slogan [#ŠtaNamTeško](#). The call is conducted by Young Researchers of Serbia in partnership with the , [the Vojvodina Environment Movement](#), [CeGraD](#), [TIM 42](#), [EMPOWER](#) with the support of the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#). Through this Call, until December 2020, 150 youth volunteer projects will be supported throughout Serbia in the amount of 20,000 to 42,000 dinars per project, and a total of 5,460,000 dinars. The actions that young people can carry out can be environmental, educational, social, i.e. especially targeted at vulnerable groups of people, then renovations, campaigns, cultural programmes.

Serbia participate in the [Global Education Week](#), an initiative that aims to popularize the concept of Global Education (see Glossary) as a tool for achieving solidarity in the world through the creation of active global citizenship. The [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#) has the role of the National Coordinator for Global Education at the [Global Education Network](#) managed by the [North-South Center of the Council of Europe](#). The Ministry participates in organizing, implementing, and coordinating activities for Global Education Week, as well as providing support to those who need it.

Every year, during the third week of November, members of the North-South Center simultaneously organize various activities with the aim of emphasizing the importance and need for Global Education at the local level. The activities can be of various nature, such as public discussions and dialogues, short film festivals, workshops, quizzes, social media campaigns and more. These activities can be organized by local governments, schools, preschool institutions, youth offices, cultural institutions, citizens' associations, associations of associations, informal groups, etc. Each year, Global Education Week has a different focus around which activities are thematically organized.

Many green campaigns are organised by the civil society organisations. One of the larger ones is [the International Green Culture Festival -Green Fest](#) organized by the [Centre for Environmental Improvement](#) and the [Belgrade Youth Centre](#) with the support of the [Ministry of Environmental Protection](#), the [City of Belgrade - Secretariat for Environmental Protection](#), the [French Embassy](#) and the [French Institute](#), the [Heinrich Bell Foundation](#), as well as with other numerous partners. "GREEN FEST" is the largest "green" event in the region of Southeast Europe, dedicated to ecology and environmental protection, which through educational, film, exhibition and activist programmes and products encourages a culture of living in accordance with green values.

The festival is divided into 3 parts:

- GREEN SCREEN FEST - film programme, is an international film programme, divided into two subprogrammes; feature and short and medium length films.
- GREEN FIELD is an international educational programme, offering new approaches to education through peer and expert education programmes.
- GREEN SQUARE is an international exhibition programme, which presents companies, organizations, artists, social enterprises and pupils' companies that develop "green" products and initiatives.

Within the festival, the Volunteer Programme for youth is also active.

Information providers

There are no particular public authorities responsible for disseminating information on global issues among young people. Instead, each actor active in the field finds appropriate ways of reaching the young audience.

Key initiatives

The provisions of Article 74 of [the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia](#), stipulates that everyone has the right to a healthy environment and to timely and complete information on its state, that everyone is responsible for environmental protection as well as that everyone is obliged to protect and improve the environment.

The [National Youth Strategy 2015-2025](#) includes as one of its specific objectives the strengthening of capacities of young people to engage in environmental initiatives and participate actively in decision-making related to climate change and environmental protection.

In accordance with the [Aarhus Convention](#), which was ratified by the Republic of Serbia in 2009, a provision on public participation in decision-making and the right to legal protection on environmental issues was included in the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly. Based on this, the Committee for the Environmental Protection may enable the presence, i.e. participation of representatives of citizens and citizens' associations at the session of the Committee in the discussion on certain issues in the field of environmental protection. Pursuant to this provision, in 2013, the Committee established a permanent "[The Green Chair](#)", to which it invites representatives of non-governmental organizations, i.e. civil society with the aim to give priority to the topics of environmental protection and sustainable development when deciding in the National Assembly. The Green Chair is a network of over 60 non-governmental organizations dealing with the environment in the broadest sense, coordinated by representatives of the [Young Researchers of Serbia](#), the [Centre for Modern Skills](#) and the [Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence](#). These three organisations represent the secretariat of the informal green parliamentary group.

In addition, the **Green Council** is an institutional mechanism for improving the environment at the level of local self-government. Through the work of the Green Councils, local self-government establishes long-term cooperation with civil society and citizens who are interested in solving problems and applying European standards in the field of environment. Youth volunteer work is also being affirmed through this initiative. The establishment of such advisory body was launched in 2010 and the Aarhus Centre from Kragujevac, with the help of the [OSCE](#), developed the first models of decisions for the establishment of the Council, and the initiative was supported by the [Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities](#).

[The Europa Diary](#) is a publication realized in cooperation of the Delegation of the European Union in the Republic of Serbia with the Ministries of Education, Science and Technological Development and of European Integration in which pupils and their teachers can easily and in an interesting way learn about the European Union, its values and the opportunities it provides. Some of the topics in the Europa Diary are learning and volunteering in the EU, student opportunities, internet security, the digital world of innovation, human and

minority rights, myths about the EU, the environment, culture. Within the initiative, a competition "Europe and I" is also organised. It invites upper secondary school pupils to participate with their creative and innovative works, individually or as a team on topics: EU and Serbia, the EU in your everyday life, myths about the EU, human rights, environment and climate change, violence prevention and Europe - united in diversity.

9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption

Green volunteering

As presented in more details in [Chapter 2.4 Youth volunteering at national level](#), the Youth Rules Programme ([Mladi su zakon](#)) is a national youth volunteering programme established by the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#) with the aim 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.

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

- youth voluntary projects and
- international voluntary workcamps.

It is coordinated by [Young Researchers of Serbia – Voluntary Service of Serbia](#) and selected Resource Centres (see Glossary) across the country. Volunteering projects with wide spectrum of environmental topics are systematized in the [Volunteering camps Catalogue](#). Regardless of the camp theme, all organized camps are meant to be ecologically sustainable. Since 2010 they have joined the global action of "sustainable camps" called Environmental Sustainability Campaign. The idea is that the organization of camps gain another dimension: caring for the environment by changing the habits of volunteers, organizers and local population. In practice, this would mean that during the preparation and implementation of the camp, additional effort is made in preventing the irrational use of natural resources, unnecessary costs, destruction of nature.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports conducts an annual [Call](#) to fund the implementation of the Youth Rules Programme. Available financial resources for the realization of the programme or projects in 2020 amount to a total of RSD 22,000,000.00.

One such national volunteering activity supported through the Youth Rules Programme 2019, has been organized in cooperation with the Young Researchers of Serbia, [the Vojvodina Environment Movement](#), [CeGraD](#), the [National Parliament](#) and the public company "[Djerdap National Park](#)". Volunteers participated in removing rubbish action and cleaned 60 km along the Djerdap highway.

Green production and consumption

Besides organizing volunteering camps, the [Young Researchers of Serbia](#) is an organization that stands for and acts on nature protection through the promotion of the principles of sustainable development. They are focusing on the promotion of the sustainable production and consumption, sustainable tourism and sustainable urban transport. The range of the activities is from capacity building and campaigns to participation in decision-making processes related to sustainable development.

In addition, the [Ministry of Environmental Protection](#), conducts an public [Call](#) for distribution of funds to support civil society organisations' (CSO) projects in the field of environmental protection.

The general goal of the Call is achieved within the following topics and areas:

- Nature protection - protection and improvement of the quality of nature;
- Ecological entrepreneurship - sustainable development - sustainable business of CSOs; encouraging cooperation on projects between CSOs and the business sector;

- citizenship activism - strengthening and raising the capacity of CSOs for citizens
- activism,
- Climate change - advancing knowledge, raising awareness and promoting the battle against climate change.

The Call is intended for civil society organisations working with all target groups, however youth is specifically emphasised within topics of *Ecological entrepreneurship* and *Climate change*.

Some of the projects supported in 2020 with the themes related to environmentally friendly production and consumption patterns or activities:

- "Find an alternative to a passenger car" by "Serbia, my home"
- "Can for our shore" – "Gea Nature Society"
- "From waste to resources" – "Environmental engineers"
- "Together in recycling" - Association "We live together"
- "PET is not garbage" - Rural centre Sova

As stated in the [Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Serbia 2019](#) the UNDP has initiated the project „[Circular Economy Platform for Sustainable Development in Serbia](#)“ in 2018 to support the transformation to **circular economy** (see Glossary) in Serbia. The project is being realised in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the private sector, academic institutions, creative industries and civil society organisations. To build a circular culture among the youngsters, a series of learning sessions and creative workshops was organised with pupils. Pupils were encouraged to think about reducing waste in their daily lives and think of creative ways of using waste which is still being generated to make new products or works of art. Other activities aimed at youth such different competitions and festivals were also supported.

9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

Intercontinental youth work cooperation

International voluntary workcamps (see more in [2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes](#)) organized through the national youth volunteering programme established by the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#) - the Youth Rules Programme (*Mladi su zakon*), can also be organised intercontinentally.

[AIESEC International](#) as a global platform for young people to explore and develop their leadership potential offers **Global Volunteer Practice Programme**. The programme is intended for young people who want to work on their personal development and make a positive impact in the world as the programme contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Young people can choose among project lasting 6 to 12 weeks in one of the 125 countries where AIESEC exists.

Development cooperation activities

There is no available information about programmes or actions organized by top level authority that aim to promote development cooperation activities among young people.

9.7 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Currently the draft of the new [National Environmental Protection Programme](#) is in the adoption process for the period from 2020 to 2022. The proposed programme was prepared on the basis of the revision of the Proposed Nature Protection Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2019 to 2025. The Nature Protection Programme is one of the basic strategic documents of nature protection which determines the long-term planning framework and policy of integrated nature protection, including conservation of biodiversity, landscapes and geo-heritage as well as sustainable use of biodiversity components in cooperation with relevant sectors at all levels.

Ongoing debates

The Ministry of Environmental Protection, in cooperation with the Aarhus Centre Novi Sad and with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, held public consultations on draft of the fourth the National Report on the Implementation of the Convention on Access to Information, public participation in decision-making and the right to legal protection in environmental matters (Aarhus Convention), all in accordance with the obligations of the Republic of Serbia as a member of the Convention. Civil society organizations, representatives of relevant institutions and the media participated in the process. These Public Consultations are the first of the planned total of 5 public consultations that the Ministry in cooperation with Aarhus Centres will hold in the coming period.

10. YOUTH WORK

Youth work has a long history in the Republic of Serbia, yet its meaning and understanding has been changing in different historical settings. It has evolved from scarce humanitarian care activities to the recognised profession. Main legal framework is given in the [National Youth Strategy \(2015-2025\)](#) and the Law on Youth. Besides the Ministry of Youth and Sports the main body credited for professionalisation of youth work is [the National Association of Youth Workers \(NAPOR\)](#).

10.1 General context

Historical developments

Development of youth work in Serbia greatly depended on complex national history and has accordingly undergone various forms. As claimed by Krnjajic in [the History of Youth work in Europe](#) (2012), different types of youth care have existed in different historical periods, from early forms in the Yugoslav Kingdom (19th century) up to the systematic institutional approach of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia (formed in 2007).

One of the first forms of the youth work was of a humanitarian nature and existed at the end of the 19th century in the form of child and youth care. The 20th century in the Yugoslav Kingdom and later in Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was the period when several small-scale organisations were formed and actively contributed to the interests of young people in different areas of social life. One of the milestones was the establishment of the Serbian Scout Organisation in 1911. This organisation resumed its activities after the Second World War and is still active. Some other organisations formed in that period are also still active:

- Nature Conservation Movement of Serbia (founded in 1960 and still active)
- Youth Researchers of Serbia (founded in 1969 and still active).

the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia (Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije, SKOJ) was active from 1919 to 1948. The SKOJ together with the Unified League of Anti-Fascist Youth of Yugoslavia became a part of a wider organisation of Yugoslav youth, the People's Youth of Yugoslavia, which later became the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia in 1974. As described in [CoE Country sheet](#) on youth work in Serbia, during and after the Second World War, anti-fascist, and ideological influences were predominant in child and youth care. The most promoted values were equality, solidarity, friendship, liberty, atheism, volunteerism, patriotism and collectivism.

Between the end of the Second World War and the 1970s, youth work activities were very popular, including voluntary labour by young people (see more in [Chapter 2.1 General context](#)). Even though the main goal was rebuilding the public infrastructure (roads, railways, etc.), other structured activities (sports and cultural activities) as well as the promotion of mobility among young people were also involved ([The History of Youth work in Europe](#), 2012).

Turbulent phase of disintegration of SFRY and transition from socialism to capitalism in the 1990s, has led to transformation of youth work as a concept. As the previous forms of organization ceased to exist and the decade was marked by student protests and a change of government - various activities, and NGO programmes and youth projects in Serbia were supported by international organisations. A significant number of programmes and projects were specifically designed for refugee and internally displaced children and youth ([CoE Country sheet](#) on youth work in Serbia).

First efforts to establish an institutional mechanism for youth activities were made in the first years of the 21st century by forming the Youth Section within the then Ministry of Education and Sports. This, however, was not long lasting due to lack of systematic political support (Ibidem).

After an intensive advocacy of youth NGOs gathered within the Youth Coalition of Serbia, in May 2007, the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#) of the Republic of Serbia was established. The adoption of the first National Youth Strategy (2008) and the [Law on Youth](#) (2011) soon followed. Since then the role of youth work has gained in importance and was further systemically supported both at the national and local levels.

[The National Association of Youth Workers \(NAPOR\)](#) was established in 2009 to ensure the quality of youth work programs, to standardize and professionalize it and make it recognized by young people, institutions working with young people, the state and society in general. In its work so far NAPOR has influenced policy development and helped developed quality assurance mechanisms for its implementation at the national and local levels.

Thus, the youth worker as occupation/profession has been recognised in 2019 National [Classification of Occupation](#).

National definition or understanding of Youth Work

Youth work is defined within the Law on Youth (2011) in Article 3 as youth activities organised by and for young people, based on non-formal education, carried out in young people's free time and undertaken with the aim of improving the conditions for personal and social development of young people, in accordance with their needs and abilities, in which young people voluntarily participate.

The definition given by NAPOR in [Glossary of Youth Policy](#) is more detailed as youth work is seen as professional, pedagogical work with young people, that takes place outside the system of formal education, i.e. within youth leisure time and in which young people participate on a voluntary basis. Youth work is complementary to formal education. It is a planned (and continuous) educational process, created with the purpose of providing support to young people in the process of gaining independence. Youth work is carried out by youth workers, who help young people in personal and social development to become active members of society and participants in the decision-making process. The idea of

youth work is based on creating a safe environment and opportunities for active participation of young people. Young people in youth work acquire competencies for employability, re-examine and build their values and attitudes, and thus their identity.

In its Glossary, NAPOR makes the distinction between non-formal education and youth work. The main differences are reflected in the methods in use. Namely, the methods of youth work are of a wider scope and include the methods of non-formal education, without being limited only to them. In addition to them, numerous methods are used that aim to encourage the emotional and social development of young people. Non-formal education may include a variety of target groups, not just young people, as is the case in youth work. In addition, whereas participants in non-formal education can be “passive beneficiaries”, youth participating in youth work is active and can often independently carry out some of the activities.

10.2 Administration and governance of youth work

Governance

Main actors

As described in more details in [Chapter 1.4 Youth policy decision-making](#), on the state level the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#) together with its [Youth Council](#) is providing the overall support to youth work through, among other things, implementation of the national policies and the preparation and implementation of a national youth strategy, action plans and programmes as well as through public calls for project funding through which programmes that support youth work can be supported.

[The National Association of Youth Workers \(NAPOR\)](#) is one of the major actors in the professionalism of the non-governmental youth sector in Serbia. As a vocational and representative union of 68 organisations whose mission is to create and develop conditions for quality assurance and recognition of youth work to develop the potential of young people and youth workers who contribute to the well-being of the local community and society. NAPOR conducts training for youth workers and awards their certification, adding to the recognition of youth workers as professionals.

Local youth Offices - bodies on the local level, within local municipalities, 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.

Since 2014, the [Foundation Tempus](#) has been responsible for implementing the education component of the Erasmus+ Programme for education, youth and sport. Following the beginning of preparatory measures for Serbia's full participation in this programme in July 2016, the Foundation Tempus also became responsible for the youth component of this programme, providing support to projects related to youth work and youth workers.

General distribution of responsibilities

Coordination mechanisms and intersectoral coordination is achieved through the bodies of self-governing local communities responsible for implementing the public interest in the youth sector at a local level.

Provincial Youth Council stimulate and coordinate activities related to the development and implementation of youth policy and propose measures for their improvement at the level of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (APV). Provincial Youth Council is established and coordinated by the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth.

Local Youth Councils are holders of youth work and youth policy, and the entities of public interest in the youth sector at the local level.

Local Youth Offices are seen as the main drivers of youth work at the local level. Level of support for youth work varies from municipality to municipality.

[National Association of Local Youth Offices](#) mediates between local Youth Offices on one side and public authorities and civil society on the other. It was established to network, exchange experiences and good practices of local Youth Offices, provide ongoing support to the local coordinators and to provide additional resources for the work of local Youth Offices to ensure the quality of youth policy at the local level in cooperation with local and national partners, institutions and organizations, competent ministries and other bodies dealing with youth policy.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

The description of the cross-sectoral cooperation between the main public actors is given in [Chapter 1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries](#).

10.3 Support to youth work

Policy/legal framework

The [National Youth Strategy \(2015-2025\)](#) is the main public policy document in the field of youth in the Republic of Serbia which recognises youth work in the context of non-formal education, where recognition of competences acquired through youth work is underlined as essential for young people. One of the specific strategic goals is "Improved quality and availability of youth work and ensured recognition of youth work". This goal further implies:

- improved quality of youth work programmes and capacity of youth work service providers;
- provided identification and recognition of youth work as service that contributes to the improvement of youth situation.

The Strategy [evaluation](#) for the implementation period 2015-2017 indicate most of the activities with both expected results were realized in the observed period.

Expected result	Activity	Percentage of completion
Improved quality of youth work programmes and capacities of youth work service providers	Support research on the needs of young women and men	100%
	Ensure continuous improvement and development of new programmes in accordance with the needs of youth and society	100%
	Ensure continuous monitoring of the effects of the implementation of youth work programmes in accordance with the developed standards for quality assurance	70%
Identification and recognition of youth work as service that contributes to the improvement of youth situation	Support activities for professionalization of youth work activities through formal and non-formal education in accordance with the standards of youth work occupations	60%

Source: [Youth National Strategy Action Plan Evaluation 2015-2017](#)

Youth activities organised by and for young people, based on non-formal education, carried out in young people's free time and undertaken with the aim of improving the conditions for personal and social development of young people, in accordance with their needs and

abilities, in which young people voluntarily participate are considered as youth work as defined in the [Law on Youth](#) (2011).

[Guidelines for quality assurance of youth work](#) developed by [The National Association of Youth Workers \(NAPOR\)](#) offers a list of types of activities that are considered as youth work divided according to:

1. topics they deal with:

- **political awareness and active citizenship** - youth participation, rights and equality, policy and education development, social actions, activism, etc.;
- **health education** - promotion of healthy lifestyles, relationships and sexuality, stress management, mental health, HIV / AIDS, first aid, alcohol, smoking, etc.;
- **prevention of social exclusion** - youth work aimed at preventing social exclusion, including education, training and employment opportunities for marginalized groups and individuals. Social integration, transition to adulthood and the labour market are supported.
- **life skills (social education)** - programs are both experiential and educational carried out through individual, group work, projects or events that contain aspects of primary prevention but also problem intervention. They are focused on identity development, values, emotion management, leadership, teamwork, planning and decision making, communication, problem solving, initiative and responsibility, professional development and orientation, etc.
- **intercultural and international awareness** - professionally guided activities that enable young people from different countries, different ethnic backgrounds and cultures to expand cultural knowledge, build skills and competencies, develop tolerance and acceptance of diversity.
- **youth informing** - consists of coordinated services through centres. The goal is to enable young people to make independent, informed decisions that will lead to organizing their own lives.
- **environmental protection** - raising the environmental awareness of young people, promoting life in harmony with nature, etc.
- **youth counselling** - focused on specific youth issues and problems. It provides information and support based on professional counselling techniques and refers young people to other institutions if necessary.
- **youth work based on free time** - includes games, sports, cultural and artistic activities with the aim of developing the physical, intellectual and other potentials of young people. It enables socialization and prevention, has a targeted educational character through a hidden curriculum. This type of youth work is considered as the first step for young people to get involved in other types of youth work.

2. the site where it is conducted:

- **youth work on the streets**
- detach youth work – conducted in places where young people gather
- “outreach” youth work – short-term activity with the aim of establishing a connection with young people and informing them about the possibilities of involvement in youth work activities
- **club youth work** – conducted in youth clubs or centres.

Youth work in Serbia is mainly practised within youth organisations or associations and organisations or associations for youth. The Law on Youth defines a **youth association** as an association whose membership represents at least two thirds of young people and whose goals or areas of achievement are aimed at young people. On the other side, an

association for youth is any other association whose goals or areas of goal achievement are, among other things, aimed at young people.

Funding

Funds for the implementation of the [National Youth Strategy \(2015-2025\)](#) are provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, as well as in the budget of the autonomous provinces and local self-governments, including the contribution of EU IPA funds, participation of the private sector, youth activity associations and other national and international programmes and donors ([CoE Country sheet](#) on youth work in Serbia).

The main funder of the youth work activities is the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Youth and Sports. According to the Law on Youth (Article 20) the funds for supporting programmes and projects of public interest in the youth sector are provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia. [Public calls](#) for proposals managed by the ministry are regular mechanism for supporting youth associations and local self-governments.

In line with the Law on Youth (Article 26), units of local self-government could allocate their budget funds for financing the needs and interests of young people. This, however, means that due to respecting the right to autonomy of local self-government and its distinctive needs they do not have a legal obligation to assign certain amounts of funds for youth issues.

Since 2016, the [Foundation Tempus](#) has been responsible for providing support to projects related to youth work and youth workers. In four-years period, 16 projects supporting mobility of youth workers were financed through the Erasmus+ Programme. Total grant of 240 147 EUR was deployed among 124 contracted organisations to support 399 participants (figure 5).



Figure 10.3.2: Overview of funded Erasmus+ projects supporting youth work

Source: Erasmus+ Dashboard

Cooperation

Other than the Law on Youth, there is no special framework of cooperation between all youth work stakeholders established or promoted by the national authorities. The Law on Youth is the legal framework based on which bodies for cooperation have been established.

The **Youth Council** established within the Ministry of Youth and Sports stimulate and harmonize activities related to the development and implementation of youth policy proposing measures for its improvement, as well as for harmonizing and coordinating intersectoral coordination at the national level. It ensures that the needs of young people are reflected in the policies and enables youth participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of public policies.

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 on cross-sectoral approach between the ministries can be read in [Chapter 1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries](#).

The Provincial Youth Council stimulates and coordinates activities related to the development and implementation of youth policy and propose measures for their improvement at the level of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (APV). Provincial Youth Council is established and coordinated by the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth.

The Local Youth Council (see Glossary) is another governmental advisory body of the Municipal Assembly/City Assembly responsible for cross-sectoral collaborative work. 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. It 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 Centres, etc.).

[The National Association of Youth Workers \(NAPOR\)](#) gathers 68 organisations with the aim of encouraging networking and exchange of knowledge and practice between associations that conduct youth work. NAPOR has for the quality assurance purposes, established a **pool of licensed organisation and trainers** for delivery of multi-modular trainings for non-formal education vocational standards as well as a **pool of mentors** for validation of previously acquired competences.

The [National Youth Council of Serbia - KOMS](#) as the highest representative body of the young population serves as an advocacy platform for the improving the position of young people and acts as a link between young people, their member organizations and various decision-makers and providers of youth programmes and services. KOMS has, together with NAPOR, been an initiator of the [Youth Network of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities \(SCTM\)](#) which supports implementation of youth programmes at the local level (see more in [9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues](#))

Moreover, KOMS has launched a **Pool of Trainers** with the aim of improving capacity building programs, standardization of work and better work on its own development, support to member organizations and other youth policy actors. The concept was developed through a broad consultative process so that its form would be better adapted to the needs of all stakeholders.

10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work

Quality assurance

[Guidelines for quality assurance of youth work](#) is developed by the [National Association of Youth Work Practitioners - NAPOR](#) in 2009. The document provides the basic types of youth work, principles and values on which it is based.

The quality assurance framework developed by the NAPOR consists of:

- Accreditation of organisations delivering youth work
- Professionalism of human resources
- Ethics in youth work
- Passport of competences / recognition of competences gained by young people through youth work programs.

Accreditation of organisations

NAPOR developed a set of 8 standards that each youth work program should fulfil. A mechanism for their implementation is based on willingness of member organizations to participate in accreditation process. The process during which the fulfilment of each standard is checked includes self-assessment and assessment of an accreditor - person with experience in youth work and advanced supervision skills. The organizations that go through the process get the certificate of *Accredited organization for implementation and promotion of quality standards in youth work*. Accreditation is valid 3 years and followed with the re-accreditation process. Since 2015 accreditation is one of the mandatory conditions for full membership in NAPOR. Accreditation is recognized by the member organizations as well as by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Professionalism of human resources

NAPOR created Curriculum for education of youth workers, which contains training programme for two vocational levels:

- Youth Leader and
- Youth Worker.

In addition, it contains a mechanism for validation of previously attained competences in youth work. The validation process is intended for persons who implement youth work in practice and continuously work on self-improvement but have no comprehensive formal or non-formal education in youth work. For those practitioners, it is possible to prove the competences that they gained through experience and different training courses in front of board of experts, in order to gain certificate for one of two vocational levels.

Those who do not have necessary experience for validation, can go through the training programme. It consists of 5 thematic modules and practice in youth work. In this case too, NAPOR issues certificates for all the participants who fulfil set of competences needed for the vocational level they are trained for. These certificates are as well recognized by member organizations and by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Ethics in youth work

NAPOR developed [Code of Ethics in Youth Work](#) and formed Council for Ethical Issues. Code of Ethics is a document which defines ethical and professional principles of youth work and each organization and each youth worker binds to respect them. Council for Ethical Issues is an independent body in NAPOR which takes care that Code of Ethics is respected and promoted.

Passport of competences / recognition of competences gained by young people through youth work programmes

Creation of *tool for recognition of competences of young people gained through youth work programmes* (Passport of Competences) is implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant actors from public, private and civil sector.

Research and evidence supporting Youth Work

As generally described in [Chapter 1.6 Evidence-based youth policy](#), there is no specific research system that follows the development of youth work. The national authorities fund a general research on the position and needs of young people or an evaluation of the

implementation of the national youth strategy, however, there is a lack of a continuous and systematic approach regarding evidence-based youth work research.

Nevertheless, sporadic research in the field of youth which also provide updated statistics on youth and sometimes youth work is carried out either by the Ministry or by other institutions:

- [the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia](#)
- [the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit](#)
- [Institute for Sociological Research](#) and the [Institute for Psychology](#) of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade;
- the Institute of Social Sciences and the Institute for Psychology (Faculty for Philosophy, University in Novi Sad)
- [Institute for Educational Research](#) - independent scientific institution dealing with theoretical and empirical studies in the field of education
- [Center for Politicological Research and Public Opinion](#) of the Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade
- Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade
- Institute for Development and Innovation
- as well as various non-governmental organisations conduct research on youth position and needs, youth employment, youth policy, etc.

Diverse NGOs conduct surveys regarding youth issues, yet NAPOR as being an organisation mostly oriented towards youth work, since its establishment has conducted several areas of research. As listed in [CoE Country sheet on youth work in Serbia](#), research studies done by NAPOR are:

- [Cross-section of the situation of youth work in Serbia \(2010\)](#) – The aim of the research was to gain an insight into the general state of youth work in Serbia, in relation to the adequacy of human resources, the structure of users and sources of funding for youth work programmes.
- [Impact of non-formal education in youth work on competence acquisition for better employability of young people \(2014\)](#) -The research was carried out by the National Association of Practitioners of Youth Work (NAPOR) with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, the USAID Sustainable Local Development Project and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.
- [Mapping Study on EU practices in recognition of competences gained through non-formal learning in youth work for the employability of young people \(2014\)](#) – the study based on recommendations, studies, research and documentation related to non-formal education in youth work, its recognition and impact on youth employability, as well as analysis of existing mechanisms at EU and individual level.
- [National Report, Serbia: "Needs for new services that stimulate the employability and role of youth work" \(2015\)](#) – a research on the attitudes of relevant stakeholders on the employability of marginalised young people.
- [Researching educational needs of practitioners of youth work \(2017\)](#)

In addition to the above research projects, NAPOR has developed a [collection book of good educational practices for youth workers](#) within a projects "Youth work and youth workers across Europe - good examples from practice about volunteering, employment, education and training".

The Foundation Tempus is member of the [Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme](#), which provides evidence to better understanding

of the processes and outcomes in youth work and non-formal education. Serbia is included in [RAY Monitoring](#) research which aims to explore a broad scope of aspects of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme in order to contribute to practice development, to improving the implementation of Erasmus+: Youth in Action and to the development of the next programme generation.

Participative youth work

Young people's participation in decision-making in general is described in [Chapter 5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making](#).

When it comes to specific participation in youth work related policies, it is enabled through the digital platform [Structural Dialogue](#). This platform gives opportunity to young people to comment on different initiatives of public authorities, on youth policies, or provide their opinion that will be included in public hearings on different subjects. One such possibility is to leave a comment, recommendation or opinion on the [Law on Youth](#) as well as [strategic goals related to youth work](#) mentioned in [Ch. 10.3 Support to youth work Policy/legal framework](#).

The [National Youth Council of Serbia - KOMS](#) together with the Ministry of Youth and Sport in 2020 conduct a project [Young people have an advantage](#). During the implementation of the program, the idea is to strengthen existing partnerships with relevant youth policy actors at the local, national and international levels, as well as to create sustainable, long-term and quality programmes that would be a consequence of intersectoral and interdepartmental cooperation. Within this project, the fourth Academy of Youth Policy will be realized, a dialogue of young people with the Minister of Youth and Sports, dialogues of young people from marginalized groups with local decision makers, digital solutions for further development of youth policy, etc. will be established.

"Smart" youth work: youth work in the digital world

NAPOR is in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports implementing a project "The first decade of recognizing youth work". Within this project a series called "Youth Online Work - Show and Connect!" is launched. The idea is to present the online platforms / methods / tools that can be used for the realization of youth work programmes. Project ["The first decade of recognizing youth work"](#) realized by the NAPOR and Ministry of Youth and Sports also targets young people. Besides online seminars, trainings, publications, podcasts targeting youth workers, this projects also gather young people. Within the project [7 digital youth clubs](#) were organized that gathered more than 100 young people. A special attention is given to the digital tools that can be used to link young people during realization of youth work programmes.

Moreover, from 2018, a component of Erasmus plus programme that supports the mobility of youth workers is available to youth organizations. The aim is to enhance their professional development through different training courses, seminars, job shadowing etc. Equipping youth workers with digital competences and increasing participation of youth are frequently addressed project topics.

10.5 Youth workers

Status in national legislation

Since the beginning of 2019, a new [Classification of Occupations](#) has been in force in Serbia, which included total of 3,641 occupations. A youth worker as a profession was included as well under the code 3412.03. Recognition of occupations enables the placement of competent youth workers in the chain of systemic care for young people, which should respond to the problem of sustainability of youth programmes, as well as the cooperation of various actors in youth policy. This is a major step towards recognition of skills gained through youth work even though the occupation is still not officially part of National Qualification Framework document adopted in 2018.

Education, training and skills recognition

There is no specific form of formal education leading to a qualification as youth worker. In addition, no training for continuous professional development, either directly organised or funded by public authorities is available to youth workers. Most of education is provided through non-formal education conducted by the NGOs.

[National Association of Youth Work Practitioners - NAPOR](#) organises training for youth workers and awards their accreditation. The process is guided by a handbook for accreditation (NAPOR 2009) and the Council for Ethical Questions.

As described in **10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work/ Quality assurance**, NAPOR has developed curriculum for the education of youth workers based on quality standards developed for qualifications in youth work on two levels:

- Youth Leader;
- Youth Worker.

The curriculum includes training for both levels of occupation, as well as a defined mechanism for the validation of previously acquired competencies in youth work. For practitioners who conduct youth work, continuously work on their training in this field, but do not have a comprehensive formal or non-formal education in youth work, it is possible to show and prove the competencies they have gained through experience and various trainings before the commission, based on which they receive a certificate for one of the 2 levels of occupation in youth work.

For those who do not have enough experience in youth work that they can validate, a training process has been created. It consists of several thematic modules and practice in youth work. Thematic modules, with defined learning outcomes, cover competencies defined by the standard of occupation and contain the theoretical basis of youth work. The modules are conducted through online learning, as well as practical work with trainers. In the revised Curricula for education of youth leaders and youth workers (2014), each module of multimodular education begins with online learning. Internship in youth work is an integral part of the training and implies the implementation of a continuous programme of youth work with a group of young people which each participant implements in their local community, in the home organization.

The implementation of the curriculum for the education of youth workers can be coordinated by NAPOR, whereby for the implementation of each individual module member organizations that have the most experience and capacity to implement them is being licensed. On the other side, the coordination of the training programmes can be implemented by NAPOR member organizations that have sufficient capacity and experience to conduct the entire training. In both cases, NAPOR issues certificates to all participants who by the end of the training meet the set of competencies required for the level of occupation for which they are being trained. The NAPOR certificate is recognized by member organizations, as well as by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

As a result of a project "Youth Work and Youth Workers Across Europe - Examples of Good Practice on Volunteering, Employment, Education and Training", NAPOR has, together with the project partners developed a [Collection Book "Educational Practices For Youth Workers"](#). The purpose of this publication is to improve the flow of information on access to different educational opportunities for youth workers and to promote examples of good practice focusing on quality, innovation and recognition of youth work across Europe. The publication presents examples of good practice of nine countries gathered around the project. They are divided into two parts:

1. Internships aimed at training youth workers;
2. Ideas and practices for the development of youth initiatives and projects.

The presented examples of good practice cover all levels: local, regional, national and international, and deal with the following topics:

- advocacy (how to make youth work visible and important for society),
- education and training of youth workers (formal and informal),
- employment youth worker.

Mobility of youth workers

As previously mentioned in [Chapter 10.3 Support to youth work/funding](#), mobility for youth workers is supported through Erasmus+ programme. In four-years period and through 16 financed projects, 399 participants were endorsed. In addition to the projects, youth workers can participate in *Transnational Cooperation Activities* (TCA). In 2019 and 2020, in total 89 participants were partaking in TCAs, in both physical and virtual mobilities.

10.6 Recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work

Existing arrangements

As generally described in [Chapter 6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning](#), the arrangements and mechanisms for skills recognition at the state level are yet to be fully developed. Even though the system of recognition of non-formal education at the moment exists only at the level of NGOs, inclusion of youth worker in the [Classification of Occupations](#) was a major step towards recognition of skills gained through youth work. As stated in the [Conclusions of the CoE on youth policy in Serbia](#), [National Association of Youth Work Practitioners - NAPOR](#) has since 2009, secured several significant milestones related to the recognition of non-formal learning and youth work in Serbia:

1. the adoption of Guidelines for quality assurance of youth work;
2. the development of standards of qualifications in youth work on three levels:
 - youth leader;
 - youth worker;
 - specialist for youth work and policies;
3. development of standards for youth work programmes and a mechanism for its implementation ((re)accreditation process of youth work programmes based on eight standards) that ensures building necessary skills and life values of young people to take active participation in community development along with promotion of democratic principles
4. development of non-formal education curricula for two vocational standards in professional youth work:
 - Youth leader
 - Youth worker
5. the development of mechanisms for the validation of acquired competences in relation to the abovementioned qualifications;
6. the creation of the Ethical Code of Youth Work and establishment of Council for Ethical Issues.
7. creation of a tool for recognition of competences of young people gained through youth work programmes and NFE (Passport of Competences).

As mentioned in [10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work/ Quality assurance](#) NAPOR has created the *tool for recognition of competences of young people gained through youth work programmes* (Passport of Competences) and implemented it in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant actors from public,

private and civil sector. They contribute to the development of the Passport and mechanism for improvement of youth employability through inter-sectoral consortium. Main purposes of this tool are:

- recognition of transferable skills (competences) that young people gain through youth work programs by employers and
- more efficient planning of professional and personal improvement of young people and recognition of impact of youth work on development of young people.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant actors from the public, private and civil society sectors co-operate in this process, developing the Passport and aiming to improve youth employability.

In addition, young people participating in international activities within the [Erasmus+ Programme](#) are encouraged to use [YouthPass](#) – recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning in youth projects.

Skills

Standards of qualifications for three levels of youth worker occupation developed by NAPOR are yet to be included in the National Qualification Framework.

10.7 Raising awareness about youth work

Information providers

The network of Local Youth Councils and Local Youth Offices offer information about youth work opportunities for young people in their local communities and beyond.

In addition and having in mind that most of the training are organized by civil society organizations (mainly youth organizations), usually they are the main information provider. The means of information dissemination is diverse and can include websites, mailing lists, social media but also different physical places like the premises themselves, or their various info stands.

[National Association of Youth Work Practitioners - NAPOR](#), as being the most influential organisation in the field of professionalisation of youth work, disseminate information on its website as well as through different campaigns to raise awareness about youth work.

The [Foundation Tempus](#) offers information about youth work opportunities within the [Erasmus+ programme](#) on its website, social media and mailing lists.

Key initiatives

At the beginning of 2018, NAPOR conducted a campaign on the importance of youth work with the aim of recognizing youth work as a factor in the development of social change. The campaign was implemented at the national level and included 40 interviews with beneficiaries of youth work programmes and youth workers. The [publication](#) was made within the project "Youth work outside the framework" which is implemented by NAPOR with the financial support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia.

10.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Thanks to the inclusion of the youth worker profession in the Classification Register 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.

One of the things that should be regulated is the education of youth workers. For now, diplomas issued by NAPOR are recognized only at the level of the youth sector, but not by state institutions. The next step would be for NAPOR to apply for a **publicly recognized organizer of adult education activities** (see Glossary) on the basis of which the diplomas issued by NAPOR would be officially recognized.

Ongoing debates

After 10 years of application of the mechanism for quality assurance of youth work programmes and due to the change of context and conditions in which youth work is conducted in Serbia today, it is necessary to revise the accreditation process of the associations, as well as adjust all developed mechanisms to NAPOR's member organizations. In an effort to make a serious change in the current practice in the implementation of the accreditation process, within the project "Youth work as a generator of change" implemented by the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners - NAPOR with the financial support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia the formation of the Working Group for Quality Assurance of Youth Work is underway.

The working group will draft a proposal for improving the quality of youth work programs that leads to providing quality services for young people in Serbia, but also opens space for discussion, what is the concept of quality in youth work and how the quality can be ensured.

GLOSSARY

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

Circular economy - an approach that integrates the economy and the waste management system and involves the reuse of waste generated during the production process or after the use of the product.

District school authority - Organizational units established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development outside the premises of the Ministry.

Drop-outs – persons who leave school (education) during the school year, i.e. drop out of school before obtaining a certificate of completion of class and do not continue further education.

Early school leavers - persons who are not in the education and training system and who have only completed primary school or less. At European Union level, early school leaving rates are measured in the population between the ages of 18 and 24.

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.

General interdisciplinary competencies - competences that are developed in school through all subjects. They are applicable in different situations and contexts in solving different problems and tasks. In the education system of Serbia, they are defined for the end of primary and secondary education, based on the list of key EU competencies and general outcomes of education defined in the [Law on the Foundations of the Education System](#).

Global education - is a pedagogical approach that fosters multiple perspectives and the deconstruction of stereotypes and builds on a learner centred approach to foster critical awareness of global challenges and engagement for sustainable lifestyles. Global Education competences build on development education, human rights education, education for sustainability, education for peace and conflict prevention and intercultural education, all being the global dimension of education for citizenship. ([The Maastricht Declaration, 2002.](#))

High culture - identifies the culture of an [upper class](#) (an [aristocracy](#)) or of a [status class](#) (the [intelligentsia](#)); and also identifies a society's common repository of broad-range knowledge and tradition (e.g. folk culture) that transcends the social-class system of the society. Sociologically, the term high culture is contrasted with the term [low culture](#), the forms of [popular culture](#) characteristic of the less-educated social classes.

Individual Education Plan - An individualized document for children/pupils/students with additional educational needs and/or disabilities, consisted of needs assessment and suggestions for improving physical or teaching and learning barriers, including the revision and adjustment of curriculum and learning outcomes if necessary.

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.

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.).

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.

NEET – stands for Not in Employment, Education or Training.

Pre-school preparatory programme - Mandatory programme for children from 5 ½ to 6 ½ years old, realized at preschool education and care institutions or primary schools.

Publicly recognized organizer of adult education activities: may include nongovernmental organisations, cultural institutions, associations, open universities, career centres, consulting and training centres, private schools or any other institutions registered for educational programmes implementation, which means they have to be approved by the [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#), as well as to fulfil adult education standards as prescribed by the [Law on Adult Education](#). When such standards are met, the institution receives a license which has to be renewed every 5 years.

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.

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

STEM – stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, including Computer Science

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.

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. 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.

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

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.

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 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 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 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 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.

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.

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