



## Youth Wiki national description

# Youth policies in Slovenia

# 2021

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



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# Slovenia

## Young People in Slovenia

According to the [Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector](#) “youth” are defined as young people and young adults of both genders aged between 15 and a completed 29 years. The share of young people (aged 15–29) in Slovenia is declining. In Slovenia, there was 320,000 young people aged 15-29 in 2017. At the beginning of 2016 they accounted for 16% of the population, ten years ago it was over 20%. The at-risk-of-poverty rate among young people in 2016 was 14.6% and was higher than that among the general population. The unemployment rate among young people was also higher than the average: at the beginning of 2017 it was amounted to 13.2%, while the total unemployment rate was 7.8%. Nevertheless, the youngest among all age groups are most satisfied with their lives, since - on a scale of 0 to 10 - they rated their lives in 2016 with an average score of 7.8, which was 0.7 points more than the average.

The situation of the young in Slovenia is defined primarily by the combination of considerable family support and prolonged inclusion in the (relatively socially-oriented and friendly) education system on the one hand, and the extremely uncertain labour market conditions on the other. Statistics indicate that young people’s employment situation is improving (youth unemployment has been gradually declining since), but young people remain one of the most vulnerable groups on the labour market. Compared to 2011, in 2016 the youth employment rate in Slovenia decreased in total by 2.5 percentage points. In 2016 the youth employment rate in Slovenia stood at 45.3% and in the EU at 48.3%. 25.1% of young employees (15–24 years) were in a permanent employment relationship, 25.5% were in a temporary employment relationship and 49.4% had other temporary employment types.

In 2015 the share of the young living in the parental household in Slovenia was 80.4% and was higher than that in the EU (65.9%). Young people move away from their parental household at an average of 28.2-year-old, which is slightly more than two years later than young peers throughout the EU.

Young people in Slovenia feel they have very little political influence, and in comparison with the EU average tend to be much less interested or involved in politics.

Compared to other EU countries, there is a growing trend of increasing obesity in Slovenia.

Young people (16-24 year-old) like to go to the cinema. In 2015, 75% of young people visited at least one cinema show, 49% attended at least one concert, 28% theatre, and 48% of young people watched a sports event or match. 69% of young people actively participated in online social networks on a daily basis (in 2015). Among forms of participation, young people in Slovenia most commonly participate in voluntary activities (35.7%), which represent a central mechanism of social inclusion of young people. Slovenian youth are most frequently members of organisations in the fields of sports, recreation and culture, while their membership in political parties is considerably lower.

### [Youth Policy in Slovenia](#)

Youth policy in Slovenia is defined in the [Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector](#), as a “harmonised set of measures of various sectoral public policies with the purpose of promoting and facilitating the integration of youth in the economic, cultural and political life of the community and appropriate support mechanisms for developing youth work and operation of youth organisations, which is carried out in cooperation with autonomous and democratic representatives of youth organisations and professional and other organisations”.

The measures to implement youth policy are taken by the state or local communities. In principle, youth policy is part of other sectoral policies (e.g. education, health,

employment) and therefore falls within the competence of different Ministries, e.g. the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Culture ...). Consequently, the implementation of youth policy is not linked to a single institution. The [Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector](#) identifies the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as the public authority responsible for the youth field. The Office for Youth mainly focuses on promoting youth work, coordinating measures within youth policy and ensuring adequate social dialogue with young people. Youth Office has been co-funding youth work programmes since its beginnings.

Several pieces of legislation regulate the youth field. The [Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector](#) may be considered as the most comprehensive and binding official document that addresses the needs and/or rights of young people and stipulates how youth issues should be addressed. [The Act](#) entered into force in 2010.

The Resolution on the National Youth Programme 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) was adopted in 2013 for the period 2013–2022. It serves as an overarching strategic public document or action plan that integrates the major directions to be followed in policy making on youth matters at the national level. Measures of the National programme for youth are covering the following fields: education, employment and entrepreneurship, housing, health and wellbeing, the social position of youth, the development of the youth sector, culture and creativity, heritage, media.

## 1. YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

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The introductory chapter gives an overview of youth policy governance in Slovenia. Several pieces of legislation regulate the youth field. The [Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector](#) may be considered as the most comprehensive and binding official document that addresses the needs and/or rights of young people and stipulates how youth issues should be addressed. It determines the public interest in the youth sector as well as the method of its implementation. The Act identifies the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as the public authority responsible for the youth field. It also specifies its responsibilities.

The Resolution on the National Youth Programme 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) serves as an overarching strategic public document or action plan that integrates the major directions to be followed in policy making on youth matters at the national level. It is the thematic guide to youth policies and programmes. The competent ministries are responsible for the implementation of the national programme, but the Office of Republic of Slovenia for Youth is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the programme through action plans.

The Slovenian government established the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as a cross-sectorial collaborative work in 2009. The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth ([Svet Vlade RS za mladino](#)) set up 4 different working groups to discuss the most relevant topics for the development of youth policy in Slovenia. These working groups can be considered as a mechanism for encouraging cross-sector cooperation because they involve representatives of various ministries.

There are no national research networks on youth in Slovenia, but the Office of Republic of Slovenia for Youth cooperates with different groups of researchers. Beside the Office for Youth, there are also other public and semi-public bodies gathering data and knowledge about youth.

Apart from the European cooperation in the field of youth, Slovenia has no other cooperation with EU or EU-candidate countries. Erasmus+ programme, the Youth in Action, is the most important instrument to encourage European and international cooperation among young people in Slovenia.



## 1.1 Target population of youth policy

Youth-related legislation

[Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector](#) ([Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#); entered into force on 12 June 2010) defines young people as all young people and young adults of both genders aged between 15 and 29. This Act does not define any other target groups of young people in relation to specific policy measures. Provisions affecting young people in the criminal (penal), civil and labour legislation differ from the above definition of young people.

Penal Legislation

[Penal Code](#) ([Kazenski zakonik](#); entered into force on 1 November 2008) defines three groups of young minors. Any person who committed a criminal offence when he was under the age of 14 years (a child), cannot be a perpetrator of a criminal offence (see Article 21). The first group is younger minors, including young people from 14 to 16 years old. Younger minors who commit crime cannot be punished, against them only educational and security measures can be imposed. The second group is older minors including young people who are already 16 years old but not yet 18. They can be exceptionally imposed a fine or juvenile detention. The third group includes young adults older than 18 who have committed a criminal offense as an adult but have not yet reached the age of 21 years. These offenders are criminally responsible, but they might receive educational or security measures only.

Civil legislation

[Code of Obligations](#) ([Obligacijski zakonik](#); entered into force on 1 January 2002) and [Marriage and Family Relations Law](#) ([Zakon o zakonski zvezi in družinskih razmerjih](#); entered into force on 23 March 2017) stipulate that a natural persons acquire full legal capacity at the age of eighteen years. A natural person can acquire full legal capacity before this age if he/she marries or becomes a parent. This is decided by the court in extrajudicial proceedings. When a young person reaches 15 years, they get a limited legal capacity.

Labour Legislation

[Employment Relations Act](#) ([Zakon o delovnih razmerjih](#); entered into force on 12 April 2013) stipulates that a young person who have reached the age of 15 years can sign an employment contract. The employment contract with a person who has not attained 15 years of age is null and void (see Article 21). Young workers aged 15 to 18 enjoy special protection, such as special restrictions regarding hard work, night work, working time, annual leave.

## 1.2 National youth law

### Existence of a National Youth Law

Several pieces of legislation regulate the youth field. According to the Youth wiki definition of the National Youth Law, the [Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector](#) ([Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#)) may be considered as the most comprehensive and binding official document that addresses the needs and/or rights of young people and stipulates how youth issues should be addressed. The Act was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia on 18 May 2010, promulgated on 28 May 2010 and entered into force on 12 June 2010.

In addition, several other legal acts, such as the following, are relevant to the youth field:

- Youth Council Act ([Zakon o mladinskih svetih](#)): adopted by the National Assembly on 19 July 2000 and amended in 18 May 2010. The Act regulates the status, operation, activities

and financing of the National Youth Council of Slovenia and local community youth councils.

- Students Association Act ([Zakon o skupnosti študentov](#)): adopted on 20 June 1994 by the National Assembly. This Act regulates the status, operation and activities of student associations in Slovenia.

## Scope and contents

*Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector* Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector adopted in 2010 determines the public interest in the youth sector as well as the method of implementing the public interest in the youth sector. It defines the youth, the youth sector, the status of youth organisations, the financial grants procedure and national awards. The Act identifies the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as the public authority responsible for the youth field. It also specifies the responsibilities of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth and ensures the promotion of the interests of the youth sector at the national level. The Act is also a legal basis for adoption of a national youth programme and establishing the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

The Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector is based on the principles of democracy, plurality, integrity, intergenerational solidarity, equality, non-discrimination and justice, multiculturalism, intercultural dialogue, volunteering, promoting a healthy lifestyle, respecting life and the environment, and the participation of non-governmental organisations in the management of public affairs.

According to the Act youth policy is a harmonised set of measures of various sectoral public policies with the purpose of promoting and facilitating the integration of youth in the economic, cultural and political life of the community and appropriate support mechanisms for developing youth work and operation of youth organisations, which is carried out in cooperation with autonomous and democratic representatives of youth organisations and professional and other organisations. In the Article 4 (Areas of youth sector), the Act also lists a variety of fields where youth policy is implemented, inter alia:

- autonomy of youth,
- nonformal learning and training and increasing the competences of youth,
- access of youth to the labour market and entrepreneurial development of youth,
- concern for youth with fewer opportunities in society,
- volunteering, solidarity and intergenerational participation of youth,
- mobility of youth and international integration,
- a healthy lifestyle and preventing various forms of youth dependencies,
- access of youth to cultural goods and promoting creativity and innovation among youth, and
- participation of youth in managing public affairs in society.

Beside the definition of the youth and youth policy, the Act brings some other definitions for wider understanding of youth policy and youth sector. It defines "youth organisation" and "organisation for youth" and for the first time it also defines youth work and structured dialogue.

The Act also defines co-financing as one of the main mechanisms available to organisations active in the youth field as they implement activities in line with programmes in the youth sector (Chapter 4). The Act likewise outlines the conditions to obtain, manage and spend these financial resources (Chapter 4).

Article 4 of the Act, under the listing of the fields of the youth sector, identifies youth with fewer opportunities in society as a special target group in relation to care. However, no further elaboration on the characteristics or needs of this target group is made.

In addition to its conventional consultation procedures (see Chapter 5 of the Youth wiki), the youth sector has been consulted in the adoption of the Act and has contributed to its final outline (see the analytical record (tab '[Analitični](#)') of the adoption and revision of the Act).

### [Youth Council Act](#)

The Youth Council Act regulates the status, operation, activities and financing of the national Youth Council of Slovenia and local community youth councils. It was adopted in July 2000 and amended in June 2010.

The Act defines the Youth Council of Slovenia as a voluntary umbrella association of national youth organisations. The Act requires that all member organisations promote the interests of the youth sector. Local community youth councils, on the other hand, bring together youth organisations, 90% percent of the membership of which are under the age of 29 and 70% of the management of which are aged between 15 and 29.

The mission of the Youth Council of Slovenia and local community youth councils is to represent the interests of member youth organisations. Their main activities are youth work and other youth activities that provide the conditions for and supports the development of youth initiatives and youth organisations, and that ensure the participation of young people in decision-making processes and other activities that are of an interest to them.

The Act ensures that the Youth Council of Slovenia and local youth councils are consulted by the government, ministries, other state bodies and local authorities on the youth-related laws and regulations that are implemented. In addition, it defines the financial support available to youth councils and sets the monitoring framework and penalties for the misbehaviour of youth councils.

In addition to its conventional consultation procedures (see Chapter 5 of the Youth wiki), the youth sector has been consulted in the adoption of the Act and has contributed to its final outline (see the analytical record (tab '[Analitični](#)') of the adoption and revision of the Act).

## **Revisions/updates**

The Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act has not yet been amended. On the other hand, the Youth Council Act was amended in June 2010 to align its content with the new Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector. Moreover, the revised Act clarifies the status of a national youth organisations, in particular the autonomy of those youth organisations that operate under other legal entities and introduces changes which shall enable wider participation of young people in decision-making.

## **1.3 National youth strategy**

### **Existence of a National Youth Strategy**

The Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia on 24 October 2013 for the period 2013–2022. It serves as an overarching strategic public document or action plan that integrates the major directions to be followed in policy making on youth matters at the national level. In essence, it is the thematic guide to youth policies and programmes; it defines the priorities and measures of public interest in the youth sector, and is not a part of any general overarching developmental strategy. The Resolution is a horizontal programming document that

combines measures in areas under the jurisdiction of different ministries, with the aims of creating new quality standards and ensuring their consistency and visibility.

## Scope and contents

The National Programme for Youth is based on the study [Youth 2010](#) (Mladina 2010) on the position of young people in Slovenia which was carried out in 2010 and published in 2011. It identifies young people as part of the society undergoing extensive changes in the last decade, which affect the quality of their life. This applies both to the social environment such as family, education and employment, as well as the situation of young people in the labour market. The National Programme for Youth attempts to ensure a better situation for young people in education, which would then be reflected in a more favourable situation for young people in the labour market, resulting in better living conditions of the youth, which may also lead to more favourable demographic trends.

The main principles of the National Programme for Youth are:

- To provide better opportunities for young people in education and training, both formal and informal;
- To develop employment policy which will ensure the economic and social security as well as autonomy of young people;
- To ensure the participation of young people and influence on decision-making concerning policies affecting them;
- To ensure equal opportunities between men and women and the prevention of discrimination;
- To prevent risk factors that cause poverty and social exclusion of young people;
- To follow the principles of sustainable development;
- To follow the principle of intergenerational cooperation and ensure greater solidarity among generations;
- To pay special attention to the health and welfare of young people and health inequalities;
- To provide young people with a safe start of their careers.

The National Programme for Youth defines the scope, objectives and priorities in six key areas: Education, Employment & Entrepreneurship; Housing; Health and Well-being; Youth and Society; Culture and Creativity. Moreover, it contains the demographics and key policies as well as methods for monitoring.

The objectives and priorities of the National Programme for Youth are clustered into the following six domains:

### 1. Objectives in Education

- To improve competences of youth (establish better system for validation of non-formal and informal learning, prevent drop-outs in vocational and technical schools and on tertiary level, establishing career guidance for youth, strengthen the scholarship policy);
- To foster (study) mobility of young people (strengthen the promotion and incentives for study and practical experiences abroad).

### 2. Objectives in Employment and Entrepreneurship

- To help youth starting the career (improve active employment policies, improve creativity, better connection of labour market needs and education);
- To improve the quality of employment (to reduce the extension of less favourable forms of employment among youth);

- To enable easier coordination between professional and private/family life.

### 3. Objectives in Housing and Residential conditions

- To assure the accessibility of apartments for youth (accessibility of loans, regulation of rental, regulation of empty apartments).

### 4. Objectives in Health and Well-being

- To stimulate and promote the regular physical activity with intention to prevent body overweight (strengthen balanced nutrition and regular physical activities);
- To prevent alcohol and drug abuse (create an environment for responsible use of alcohol).

### 5. Objectives in the field of Youth and Society

- To promote youth participation (promotion of youth participation, promotion of structured dialogue, strengthening the infrastructure in youth sector and strengthening the information and counselling in youth sector);
- To promote the establishing of new youth organisations (increase funding of youth organisations, support geographically balanced development of youth organisations, create a system for education and training for youth workers/leaders).

### 6. Objectives in Culture and Creativity

- To enhance the accessibility of cultural activities to young people and increase cultural engagement of youth.

Although, the strategy consists of only 6 fields of objectives, all of the eight areas of action indicated in the EU youth strategy are included in the strategy. Furthermore, the strategy goes even beyond the topics listed in the EU youth strategy as it also addresses the topic of Housing and Residential conditions which is an always important debate in the Slovenia, especially among young people, which were recently shocked by the [news](#) that there is a deficit of 10 000 apartments available for rent in Slovenia. Moreover, in 2016 OECD [found](#) that 76,4% of young people live at home.

In addition to its conventional consultation procedures (see Chapter 5 of the Youth Wiki), the youth sector has been consulted in the adoption of the programme and has contributed to its final outline (see the analytical record (tab '[Analitični](#)') on the adoption and revision of the Act).

## **Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy**

The Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia on the proposal of the Government. The competent ministries are responsible for the implementation of the national programme, but the [Office of Republic of Slovenia for Youth](#) (Urad RS za mladino) is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the programme through action plans. Responsible institutions for the implementation of the cross-sectorial national programme are:

- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport,
- Ministry of Culture,
- Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- Ministry of Health,
- Ministry of Finance,
- Ministry of Economic Development and Technology,
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food,
- Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning,

- Ministry of Defence,
- Ministry of the Interior,
- Ministry of Public Administration,
- Ministry of Infrastructure,
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
- Ministry of Justice.

Ministries report to the Office for Youth.

On the basis of this Resolution, the Government on yearly or two-yearly basis adopts implementation plans:

1. Government decision No 60300-2/2014/8 from April 17 2014 on the adoption of the Implementation plan for 2014 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leto 2014](#));
2. Government decision No 60300-3/2015/12 from May 14 2015 on the adoption of the Implementation plan for 2015 (Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leto 2015);
3. Government decision on the adoption of the Implementation plan for the period 2016/2017 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2016 in 2017](#)).
4. Government decision No 60300-5/2018/4 from June 6 2018 on the adoption of the Implementation plan for the period 2018/2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2018 in 2019](#)).
5. Government decision on the adoption of the Implementation plan for the period 2020/2021 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2020 in 2021](#)).

In each of the action plans specific objectives, actions, terms of implementation, budget allocations and responsible institutions for its implementations are indicated. Relevant ministries report to the Office for Youth because monitoring and evaluation are under its jurisdiction. The interim report is to be submitted to the National Assembly every three years, whereas the final report is to be submitted after the expiry of the validity of the National Programme for Youth. An evaluation (interim or final) of the Programme has yet to be performed. However, in 2017, expert interim evaluation of National Programme for Youth was performed by the expert group. Briefly, it came to the following conclusions:

- The current design and implementation of the programme does not guarantee a youth-oriented approach.
- Roughly, the programme is a collage mainly consisted by universal sectoral measures with its objectives, implementation logic, reporting and evaluation, but not necessarily directed at youth.
- The reporting system permits to report on performed activities that were not necessarily planned, but also do not necessarily coincide with the defined objectives of the programme.
- Measures without valid methodology are also part of the report.
- Due to the sectoral orientation of most of the measures deriving from sectoral public policies, the difficulty of addressing cross-sectoral areas can be observed, for example, youth and society or cross-sectoral concepts such as gender equality, intergenerational solidarity and sustainable development.
- On the other hand, the most stable areas in which most of the measures were implemented, classical vertical areas such as, for example, employment and education.

The evaluation concludes with the question of the future form of the national youth programme as a key issue. The general orientations are two, they believe, (1) a return to

a coherent vertical youth policy with clear reporting systems and cross-sectoral coordination; or (2) a comprehensive horizontal youth policy with clear and adequate organisational and financial support.

- Additionally, an expert interim evaluation of the Programme in the period 2017-2019 was performed in 2020 (see [Vmesna evalvacija Nacionalnega programa za mladino v letih 2017-2019](#)). Briefly, it came to the following conclusions:
  - The Programme is being implemented in line with financial and institutional capacities and the implementation of actions within the identified sub-areas is strengthening. However, the limited financial and human resources are also reflected as a major constraint of the Programme, which has been highlighted by various stakeholders.
  - Overall, the Programme has had a significant impact on the perception of young people in public policy-making and implementation processes, and has raised awareness among key stakeholders of their specific needs and interests.
  - The Programme is a successful mechanism for implementing vertical youth policies, but on the other hand, when other sectoral policies and related instruments intervene in the measures themselves, the Programme appears to be an instrument with limited reach, as it is at best at cross-purposes, and at worst in conflict with other sectoral public policy mechanisms. The sectoral orientation of most of the actions makes it particularly difficult to address cross-sectoral areas such as intergenerational solidarity and sustainable development. They are more effective in addressing traditional vertical areas such as employment and education.

## Revisions/ Updates

There have been no revisions of the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth so far.

## 1.4 Youth policy decision-making

### Structure of Decision-making

National level

#### Government

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia proposes a National Programme for Youth for adoption by the National Assembly. This is the main document that forms youth policy agenda and specific policy measures.

The coordination of youth policy is delegated to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport ([Office for Youth](#)), but the implementation of various measures is a responsibility of competent ministries, namely:

- Ministry of Culture,
- Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- Ministry of Health,
- Ministry of Finance,
- Ministry of Economic Development and Technology,
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food,
- Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning,
- Ministry of Defence,

- Ministry of the Interior,
- Ministry of Public Administration,
- Ministry of Infrastructure,
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
- Ministry of Justice.

Within the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and in line with the Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as an independent body performs the following tasks:

- prepares the regulations and measures in the field of the youth sector;
- provides financial support for youth programmes and programmes for youth;
- provides for and execute supervision for the implementation of regulations and measures in the youth sector;
- monitors the situation of youth and the impact of measures in the youth sector;
- cooperates with the responsible bodies and other subjects in the youth sector;
- participates in representing the State in the bodies of the European Union and the Council of Europe and at an international level in the matter relating to youth, and
- performs other tasks in accordance with the law.

### **Parliament**

The National Assembly adopts national youth policies and controls the implementing institutions. The National Assembly adopted the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act and, based on this Act, also the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 (national youth strategy). It monitors the implementation of the resolution by revising evaluation reports.

The National Assembly has also established a committee that is among others also in charge of youth issues. The committee discusses legislation proposals and issues related to pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education, adult education, science and research, information society, electronic communications, sport, youth and its role and position in society, promotion of active citizenship among young people and questions related to sustainable and stable financing of youth policy and other issues addressed by the relevant ministry in this area.

### **Local level**

The Constitution defines municipalities as local self-governed communities which are in principle financed from their own resources (collected taxes, benefits, income from property), whereby economically weak municipalities are supported by government subventions. The compliance of municipality bodies is controlled by national bodies.

Act on the Public Interest in Youth Sector defines that local communities implement the youth policy at a local level in accordance with its own interests, needs, capabilities and circumstances, such as the number and structure of inhabitants, its economic power, and spatial and personnel capacities in the youth sector. Local communities may implement the youth policy at a local level by adopting a local programme for youth, establishing a working or consulting body for youth issues, financially supporting the programmes in the youth sector, and implementing other measures in the youth sector.

The role of local communities in developing youth policies varies and depends on the size of each local community. The municipality of Ljubljana, the capital, has a structure within the city administration (youth department) that provides public tenders (for youth programmes, projects, information network, international activities), youth research, networking NGO in youth sector, information network for young people, educational programmes and trainings for youth workers, empowerment of youth NGO structures. In



2015, the Council of Municipality of Ljubljana adopted a youth strategy for the period 2016-2025.

Smaller communities cooperate closely with youth centres that take over part of the tasks that local community should provide. Because most of the local communities do not have a youth office, the cooperation with local authorities and youth centres is of essential importance.

## Main Themes

According to the Act on the Public Interest in Youth Sector, the youth policy is a harmonised set of measures of various sectoral public policies with the purpose of promoting and facilitating the integration of youth in the economic, cultural and political life of the community and appropriate support mechanisms for developing youth work and operation of youth organisations, which is carried out in cooperation with autonomous and democratic representatives of youth organisations and professional and other organisations.

Youth policy is implemented in the following fields:

- autonomy of the youth,
- informal learning and training and increasing the competences of the youth,
- access of the youth to the labour market and enterprise development of the youth,
- care for the young with fewer opportunities in society,
- volunteering, solidarity and intergenerational participation of the youth,
- mobility of the youth and international integration,
- promoting a healthy lifestyle and preventing various forms of youth dependencies,
- access of the youth to cultural goods and promoting creativity and innovation among the young,
- and participation of the youth in managing public affairs in society.

Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 has the following principles:

- To provide better opportunities for young people in education and training, both formal and informal.
- To develop employment policy which will ensure the economic and social security as well as autonomy of young people.
- To ensure the participation of young people and influence on decision-making concerning policies affecting them.
- To ensure equal opportunities between men and women and the prevention of discrimination.
- To prevent risk factors that cause poverty and social exclusion of young people.
- To follow the principles of sustainable development.
- To follow the principle of intergenerational cooperation and ensure greater solidarity among generations.
- To pay special attention to the health and welfare of young people and health inequalities.
- To provide young people with a safe start of their careers.

The Resolution on the National Programme for Youth also defines the key guidelines of the youth policy in Slovenia:

- Targeted and continuous investment of resources and attention to young people and their autonomy.
- Ensuring that young people are a priority social groups in all sectoral public policies.
- Establishing cross-sectoral cooperation for implementation of youth policy.
- Unifying concept of the target group which is young people aged 15 to 29 that need to be defined as a underprivileged group in all public policies.
- Participation of young people in strategic planning, evaluation and implementation of youth policy at local and national levels.
- Ensuring conditions for learning and opportunities of young people to develop skills and competencies to fully integrate into the labour market and civil society and increase their capabilities to resist any potential social, economic or environmental risks as well as ensure conditions for formal, non-formal and informal learning through enhanced mechanisms for recognition and validation of such learning within national qualifications frameworks.
- Ensure effective monitoring of the youth policy provisions and address its weaknesses.
- Promote development of youth strategies and programmes on local level.

For the effective implementation of the youth policy in Slovenia and the provisions of the National Programme for Youth, the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth has set up 4 different working groups to discuss the most relevant topics for the development of youth policy in Slovenia:

- the preparation and the amendments of the Public interest in the Youth Sector Act;
- monitoring of the National Youth Programme;
- cohesion policy and use of EU fund for youth policy measures;
- policies promoting the quality apprenticeship and internship of young people.

The choice of themes for the Resolution on the National Youth Programme is also guided by the study [Youth 2010](#) (Mladina 2010), which focuses on the role of young people in Slovenia and was published in 2011.

Article 4 of the Act on the Public Interest in Youth Sector identifies youth with fewer opportunities in society as a special target group in relation to care. Likewise, the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 identifies the need to attend to youth with fewer opportunities in relation to scholarships, youth work and social inclusion. When defining its priorities, the Resolution, under the heading social inclusion (Chapter 6), particularly accentuates the position of youth with fewer opportunities facing social exclusion where individuals with disabilities and Roma youth are explicitly mentioned.

## **The National Agency for Youth**

There is no national agency for youth in Slovenia.

## **Policy monitoring and evaluation**

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport provide monitoring and evaluation of policy results defined by the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022. The success of the Implementation plan of the National Programme for Youth is measured using the (impact) indicators, which are designed for each measure to be implemented. The Public Interest in Youth Sector Act ([Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#)) states in Article 16, paragraph 6: *'Every three years the Government shall submit to the National Assembly a partial report on implementing the National Programme for Youth with evaluated results, and a final report after the expiry of the validity of the National Programme for Youth. The National Assembly shall consider the report and prepare its position relating thereto'*.

The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth also monitors the implementation of the National Programme for Youth.

After the study titled 'Youth 2000' ([Mladina 2000](#)), there was no in-depth research systematically and comprehensively exploring youths and their situation until 'Youth 2010: The Social Profile of Young People in Slovenia' (Mladina 2010). In 2021, the new 'Youth 2020: The position of young people in Slovenia' ([Mladina 2020: Položaj mladih v Sloveniji](#)) was published. A few similar studies were published in between: 'The Matrix of Measures Implemented in the Youth Policy Field by the National Authorities' ([Matrika ukrepov državnih organov na področju mladinske politike](#)) and '[Slovenian YOUTH 2013](#)'. The studies covered all areas that are important to young people.

#### Employment:

The ESS published an analysis of statistical data, 'Youth and the labour market' ([Mladi in trg dela](#)), in 2015. In 2013, it published the Annex to the Implementation Plan of the YG 2014/2015. Along with the ESS, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia and the MDDSZ regularly perform analyses and research. These organisations are helping to keep data on (youth) employment up to date. In 2019, the 'Slovenian Youth 2018/2019' ([Slovenska mladina 2018/2019](#)) document was published based on a research funded by the [Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation](#). The document presents results of the analysis of different aspects of young people's life, including employment and compares Slovenian data with EU average. In 2021, the results of 'Youth 2020' ([Mladina 2020](#)), a national survey on the position of young people in Slovenian society, were published. One of its key study areas studied was youth employment (and entrepreneurship).

The National Youth Council of Slovenia monitors the implementation of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 and measures in line with the YG. The implementation of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 should, in principle, be very easy to monitor because of well-defined indicators. The National Assembly Committee, which is responsible for youth, decided that the Office for Youth (or the competent Ministry) should report twice a year regarding the implementation of the Programme. The report is tied to the specific implementation plan of the National Programme for Youth.

Reports on the implementation of the YG 2014/2015, which were requested by the Slovenian government in May 2016, summarise the key statistics, which show changes during the implementation of the YG and include both technical and financial views of the performance of each individual measure. A special chapter of the report was prepared by representatives of young people to present their views on the implementation of the YG. Youth advisers working at the ESS also presented their views. They are in daily contact with unemployed young people and constantly try overcome challenges related to employment with them. The last section provides conclusions and recommendations regarding further action.

#### Social inclusion:

In 2021, the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia published the Final Report on the Implementation of the Objectives of the Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme 2013-2020 ([Zaključno poročilo o izvajanju in doseganju ciljev Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013–2020](#)). The report notes, among other things, that the labour force participation rate among young people (aged 25-29) has risen from 45.9% in 2015 to 52.3% in 2019. However, young people are largely precariously employed, which has implications for risky life trajectories. The report concludes that the Resolution did not sufficiently address these risks in order to ensure adequate social security of young people. In 2016, the Social Protection Institute published the report 'Monitoring implementation and achievement of the objectives of the Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme for the period 2013–2020' ([Spremljanje uresničevanja in doseganja ciljev Resolucije o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013–2020](#)). The report comprises a census of activities carried out in 2015. In the youth sector, these were mainly programmes for children and

adolescents deprived of a normal family life, and for children and adolescents with developmental issues, during the period 2012–2014. Furthermore, in 2017, the Social Protection Institute published the report 'Monitoring implementation and achievement of the objectives of the Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme for the period 2013-2020: Report for the period 2016-2017' ([Spremljanje uresničevanja in doseganja ciljev Resolucije o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013-2020: Poročilo za obdobje 2016-2017](#)); in 2018 the report 'Monitoring implementation and achievement of the objectives of the Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme for the period 2013-2020: Report for the period 2017-2018' ([Spremljanje uresničevanja in doseganja ciljev Resolucije o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013-2020: Poročilo za obdobje 2017-2018](#)); in 2019 the report 'Monitoring implementation and achievement of the objectives of the Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme for the period 2013-2020: Report for the period 2018-2019' ([Spremljanje uresničevanja in doseganja ciljev Resolucije o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013-2020: Poročilo za obdobje 2018-2019](#)); in 2020 the report 'Monitoring implementation and achievement of the objectives of the Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme for the period 2013-2020: Report for the period 2019-2020' ([Spremljanje uresničevanja in doseganja ciljev Resolucije o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013-2020. Poročilo za obdobje 2019-2020](#)).

The Office for Equal Opportunities ([Sektor za enake možnosti](#)) also co-financed a research project entitled 'Effects of Discrimination on Societal, Political and Social Inclusion of Young People in Slovenia: An Analysis on the Basis of Gender, Sexual Orientation and Ethnicity' ([Posledice diskriminacije na družbeno, politično in socialno vključenost mladih v Sloveniji: analiza glede na spol, spolno usmerjenost ter etnično pripadnost](#)), which was completed in 2008. The objective was to use this analysis as a basis for 'proposals for formulating and improving anti-discrimination policies in the field of social protection, reducing social exclusion and social deprivation, and preventing discrimination on the basis of analysed personal circumstances'.

In 2011, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth funded two analyses of the situation, which were carried out by the Youth Network MaMa and Pohorski Bataljon; they examined the functioning and impacts of the youth centres and youth field organisations in Slovenia: 'Youth Centres in Slovenia' and 'Analysis of the Situation and Potentials of Non-Governmental Youth Field in Slovenia'. In 2012, the Youth Council of Slovenia published its analysis of the functioning and impacts of national youth organisations. The [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (Statistični urad RS) has also conducted research (e.g. on risk of social exclusion in relation to income and poverty).

## 1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

### Mechanisms and actors

The Slovenian government established the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as a cross-sectoral collaborative work in 2009. The Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector adopted in 2010 further provided a detailed definition of the Council's competences. The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth ([Svet Vlade RS za mladino](#)) set up 4 different working groups to discuss the most relevant topics for the development of youth policy in Slovenia. These working groups can be considered as a mechanism for encouraging cross-sector cooperation because they involve representatives of various ministries. But at the same time it can be considered also a mechanism for consultation with young people because there are also young people represented in each working group.

Together with the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth Issues, these working groups create a path to establish a strong co-management system in the future between the government and young people.

The first working group is a working group for preparation of amendments of the Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector. The working group consists of 4 representatives of the government (Office for Youth, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Public Administration) and 4 representatives of youth sector. The working group is led by a representative of the Office of Youth.

The second working group aims at monitoring the implementation of the National Programme for youth. The working group consists of 4 representatives of the government (Office for Youth, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and Ministry of Public Administration) and 4 representatives of youth sector. The working group is led by a representative of the Office of Youth.

The third working group aims at monitoring the implementation of the Operational Programme for the implementation of the EU cohesion policy for the period 2014-2020 ([Operativni program za izvajanje evropske kohezijske politike za programsko obdobje 2014-2020](#)) with the representatives of Government Office for Development and European cohesion policy, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and Ministry of Public Administration on the government side and 4 4 representatives of youth sector. The working group is led by a representative of the Government Office for Development and European cohesion policy.

The fourth working group deals with apprenticeship and internship of young people and consisting of the following governmental representatives: Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance. There are 5 representatives from youth sector. Working Group on apprenticeship and internships is coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

## 1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

### Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

[The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth](#) has been promoting youth surveys ever since Slovenia started to develop its youth policy (1991). The evidence-based policy will therefore constitute an important part of the youth policy development in Slovenia. It is envisaged that the national youth programme will be revised every 3 years based on the research of the social position of youth in Slovenia.

There is no direct reference to evidence-based youth policy [in the Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector](#), although the act defines the role of administrative body responsible for youth in Slovenia (Office of Republic of Slovenia for Youth) in its Article 7. Among other things the competence of the Office of Republic of Slovenia for Youth is to provide for and execute supervision for the implementation of regulations and measures in the youth sector and monitor the situation of youth and the impact of measures in the youth sector.

Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector identifies the need to develop the National Youth Programme. The programme includes a reference to an evidence-based approach to youth policy to fully achieve the objectives of youth policy and the national youth programme ([Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013 – 2022](#)) also envisages establishment of a national institute for youth research or rather identifying one of the existing institutions already working in the field of research as a reference organisation for youth research and evidence-based policy development. It also introduces a set of measurable indicators and explains their desired values to facilitate solid evidence-based assessments of the performance of individual policies.

In 2011, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth funded two analyses of the situation, which were carried out by the Network of Youth centres MaMa and the Pohorski Bataljon Foundation; they examined the functioning and impacts of the youth centres and youth field organisations in Slovenia: 'Youth Centres in Slovenia' ([Mladinski centri v](#)

[Sloveniji](#)) and '[Analysis of the Situation and Potentials of Non-governmental Youth Field in Slovenia](#)'.

Beside the Office for Youth, there are also other public and semi-public bodies gathering data and knowledge about youth. These bodies inform the government about key youth developments related to their field of operation or their professional domain.

#### 1. [Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia](#)

The Social Protection Institute complies and maintains a variety of databases for social assistance and social services including development and experimental programs. It monitors the implementation of a number of government programs by establishing specialized systems of indicators and provides informational support for them by collecting and analysing data. The government has supported and promoted cross-disciplinary research relating to children and young people up to 18. There is a child observatory for children up to 18 years established within the Institute; its operation is supported by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

#### 2. [The Education Research Institute](#)

The Institute was established in 1965 as an institute devoted to the study of education. It implements various programmes, projects and evaluations on youth matters from an educational perspective.

#### 3. [National Institute of Public Health](#)

The data and information collected by the Institute are the basis for the decision and action of individuals, professionals and health policy. It identifies key public health challenges in the population including the determinants that affect health, and propose measures to improve health.

#### 4. [National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia](#)

The National Education Institute is important factor in the education system's development process. It proposes new curriculum solutions, develops methods for the successful transfer of modifications into the education system and helps integrate new curriculum elements into practice. Within its line of competences, the Institute collects and processes data relevant to policy making in the field of education of the children and the youth.

#### 5. [Employment Service of Slovenia](#)

An efficient, user-friendly and user-oriented Employment Service. The aim of all ESS activities is to contribute to the growth of employment and employability of the population in Slovenia. In cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Institute actively contributes to the development of employment policies in Slovenia also by collecting and analysing data related to youth employment and employability. The Institute participates in the creation of several policy measures developed for young people as the main target group.

### **Cooperation between policy-making and research**

There are no national research networks on youth in Slovenia, but the Office of Republic of Slovenia for Youth cooperates with different groups of researchers. In the period between 1993 and 2000, the Office for Youth had a long-term contract with the [Centre For Social Psychology at the Faculty of Social Science](#), which provided the necessary financial support for research on the youth and which resulted in several studies on the status of the youth (e.g. Mladina v devetdesetih (Youth in the nineties); Mladina 2000: Slovenska mladina na prehodu v tretje tisočletje (Youth 2000: Slovenian Youth in Transition to the Third Millennium)). In 2009–2011, the Office for Youth signed a contract with [the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia](#), with the aim of promoting evidence-based youth policies.

The basis for defining the appropriate strategic objectives of the National Youth Programme was the study of [Youth 2010: The social profile of young people in Slovenia](#)

(Mladina (2010): družbeni profil mladih v Sloveniji), which was conducted in 2010 and published in 2011. The study was carried by the Faculty of Arts of the University of Maribor. It covered demographic changes and intergenerational cooperation, education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, participation, creativity, culture and leisure time, the virtualisation of daily life, health and wellbeing, the financial status of young people, housing and living conditions, globalisation and youth mobility, values, sustainable social action plans and visions of the future, personal characteristics and the religiosity of young people.

The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth is closely cooperating with the Erasmus Programme, the Youth in Action National Agency and its research partner in an effort to identify emerging issues in the youth field. As a result, an initiative called Key to inclusion ([Ključ do vključenosti](#)), which deals with the problem of youth radicalisation and promotes youth inclusion, has been established. It resulted in a series of intra- and cross-sectorial consultations with relevant stakeholders in 2016 and shall be continued in 2017 with activities that focus on transnational consultations.

## National Statistics and available data sources

[Statistical Office of Republic of Slovenia](#) publishes regular thematical reports on youth, usually on International Day of Youth (12 August); In 2009 the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia prepared an extensive statistical report on the situation of young people in Slovenia. Employment Service of Slovenia monitors the situation of young people in the labour market; and the Institute of Public health has been involved in the Health Behaviour and School-Aged Children (HBSC) research since 1983.

## Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field

The government does not have a line of funding for research on the youth, which explicitly supports evidence-based youth policy making, apart from resources allocated to the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth for the conduct of periodic youth studies and for contract evaluations of the National Youth Programme. In line with the former, the Office has contracted the Faculty of Arts of the University of Maribor to conduct a study on the situation of young people in Slovenia Youth 2010 (Mladina 2010). The amount allocated for the study was 66.580 EUR.

## 1.7 Funding youth policy

### How Youth policy is funded

Youth Office has been co-funding youth work programmes since its beginnings. The amount of money available for youth work programmes in 2015 was 1.28 million EUR. The same amount was allocated in 2016. As part of the two-year public calls for co-financing youth work programmes, in the period 2016/2017, funds were announced in the amount of 2,400,000.00 EUR (1,200,000.00 EUR /year) and 2,900,000.00 EUR in the periods 2018/2019 and 2020/2021 (1,450,000.00 EUR/year). In 2018 and 2019 the state raised funds for the Office for Youth by 500.000,00 EUR (20.8%).

The National Programme for Youth ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)), adopted in 2013 for the period 2013-2022, provides a range of different measures in the fields of education, employment and entrepreneurship, housing, health and wellbeing, the social position of youth, the development of the youth sector, culture and creativity, heritage, media. The amount available for a wide set of measures defined in the National programme for Youth in 2015 was 169 million EUR (European funds included). The allocated resources in 2016 amounted to 199.6 million EUR.

### What is funded

Measures of the National programme for youth are covering the following fields: **education** (improving competences of young people; increasing international student

mobility), **employment and entrepreneurship** (facilitating start of working career for young people; improving the quality of employment; facilitating better coordination between work, private and family life), **housing** (provision of capacities and systematic accessibility of housing for young people; affordable housing for young people and the establishment of support mechanisms), **health and wellbeing** (promoting regular physical activity, a balanced diet and maintaining recommended body weight among young people; prevention of smoking and first attempts at smoking, risky and harmful use of alcohol and illicit drugs, ensuring healthy and safe entertainment for young people, and combating sport-related violence and vandalism; strengthening care for sexual and reproductive health of youth and family planning; promoting positive mental health among young people and reducing mortality from suicide among young people; ensuring a higher level of safety and health at work for young workers; improving road safety and reducing the number of injuries and deaths of young people in traffic; improving travel habits among young people as a commitment to sustainable mobility; reducing the impact of a changing environment on young people's health), **social position of youth and the development of the youth sector** (promoting participation and representation of young women and men; promoting the establishment and development of organisations in the youth sector, the development of key areas of the youth sector and ensuring the functioning of non-organized youth; promoting participation and strengthening of international youth work and learning mobility in youth work; strengthening the research and analysis segment in the youth field; promoting volunteering among young people; promoting a sustainable mode of social action with a focus on the transition to a low carbon society and green economy; greater social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities), **culture and creativity, heritage, media** (concern for accessibility of quality cultural offer and participation of young people in culture; caring for literacy in the Slovenian language, other native languages and foreign languages and media literacy; culture and creativity are socially recognized as a foundation of general education of each individual).

### Financial accountability

Each ministry is responsible for its budget allocation for measures on national youth policy. The report about the implementation of the measures within the National Programme for Youth is prepared by the Office for Youth and adopted by the National Parliament. The correct and rational manner of use of public resources is monitored by the [Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia](#), which provides assessments on the conformity of operations with regulations and guidelines, and on the cost-effectiveness of operations.

### Use of EU Funds

There were 4 public calls using European funds for youth sector only published in the period between 2009 and 2016.

1. European Regional Development Fund (13 million EUR in the period between 2009-2011) There were ten new youth centres established in Slovenia by the end of 2011 with ERDF support; their total accommodation capacity is 420 beds and their investment value amounts to approximately 13 million EUR. The centres are expected to provide a total of 20 000 overnight stays per year, and at least thirty new jobs.

2. European Social Fund (4 million EUR in a period 2010-2012) Four million euros were allocated through a special tender for establishing eight content networks bringing together youth organisations and external partners; they aim at providing better training to young people in the areas of social, citizenship and cultural competencies. All networks focus on quality human resources training within the framework of an emerging complex society, which is based on formal and non-formal forms and methods of education.

3. European Social Fund (0.8 million EUR in 2014) The aim of the call was to co-finance projects of non-governmental organisations in the youth sector to develop social and civic competences of young people.



4. European Social Fund (5 million EUR in a period 2016-2018). The aim of the call is to support innovative ways of youth work and within it employability and employment of young people.

## 1.8 Cross-border cooperation

### Cooperation with European countries

Apart from the European cooperation in the field of youth as part of the Open Method of Coordination and based on the Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), Slovenia has no other cooperation with EU or EU-candidate countries. There is only one bilateral agreement in the field of youth signed in 2015 with the Republic of Serbia. The Memorandum on the Consensus on Collaboration in the Fields of Youth and Sport ([Memorandum o soglasju o sodelovanju na področju mladine in športa](#)) establishes the firm political support for the mutual collaboration of the youth and sport organisations at the state level.

### International cooperation

Erasmus+ programme: Youth in Action, is the most important instrument to encourage European and international cooperation among young people.

A new national strategy for internationalization of Slovenian higher education ([Strategija internacionalizacije slovenskega visokega šolstva 2016-2020](#)) with concrete measures and actions was adopted in 2016. The strategy precisely defined the elements of internationalization of Slovenian higher education and provide a platform for financing international agreements and cooperation programmes and international mobility, which is financed from the national budget. In 2011, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology adopted a national programme in which the internationalisation of the Slovenian higher education was identified as an objective. It highlights the international dimension of higher education institutions: networking, joint study programme measures to attract foreign students and teachers, integration of international dimension in teaching, constant quality language trainings, etc.

Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, together with [the Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund](#) has developed the Ad futura for International Mobility Programme to promote international education and short-term mobility and improve the quality of education and employability of participating pupils and students.

The Ad futura International Mobility Programme ([Štipendije Ad futura za izobraževanje](#)) provides scholarships that are intended for applicants who wish to attend educational programmes where they could obtain a college or university degree. The programme implements the following scholarship programmes and co-financing programmes:

- Ad futura scholarships for studying abroad,
- scholarships for studies at the European University Institute (EUI),
- scholarships for short-term visits to foreign pupils and students during their education in Slovenia,
- participation of pupils and students in knowledge and research competitions abroad,
- scholarships and other forms of research funding of foreign postgraduate students.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published a call ([javni poziv](#)) for projects that contribute to public awareness, global learning and capacity building for NGOs in the Republic of Slovenia for international development cooperation and humanitarian aid as well as projects on human rights education with emphasis on children's rights in the Western Balkan countries for the period 2016/2017.

## 1.9 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

By the mid of the summer 2018 new Slovenian government was formed. The Coalition Agreement on Cooperation in the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Mandate period 2018-2022 ([Koalicijski sporazum o sodelovanju v Vladi Republike Slovenije za mandatno obdobje 2018 – 2022](#)) outlines several policy developments that are relevant and important for the youth and serve as indicators of potential forthcoming policy developments.

Topic 3.10. titled Participation, housing policy and employment of younger generations recognizes youth as an important part of society, furthermore it recognizes contemporary barriers, such as youth being reduced politically and socially to co-operation, while meaningful measures to provide independence and the resolution in the field of housing problems are something young people are facing in day to day life.

The document therefore recognizes following four challenges:

1. easier transition of young people to the labor market and provision of safe forms for young people,
2. promoting brain circulation and attracting overseas educated back to Slovenia,
3. increasing the participation of young people in society,
4. resolving housing problems of young people.

### Ongoing debates

In 2022, Slovenia will hold elections to the National Assembly and local elections, which will result in the formation of a new Government of the Republic of Slovenia. The election of new political representatives will also have an important impact on the further development of youth policy in the country. The current National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 will also come to an end in 2022. The findings of Youth 2020 ([Mladina 2020](#)), an in-depth survey on the position of young people in Slovenian society, published in 2021, will have an important influence on the design of the new programme for youth.

Currently, much of the debate is related to the quality of youth work. Various institutions are involved in these discussions, including the Office for Youth and the Youth Council of Slovenia, which also organised the annual national youth sector consultation on the topic in November 2019.

## 2. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

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Slovenia has a long tradition of voluntary work. Voluntary activities are deeply rooted in our society, in particular, they are predominantly used in solving the most difficult social problems and unveiling the problems of individuals and groups where state institutions have not yet been involved, or have ceased to be. In particular, volunteering is the basis of operation for fire brigade societies, societies of retired people, friends of youth societies, mountaineering and sports societies, the Red Cross, Caritas, self-help organisations and numerous other humanitarian, cultural and sports organisations. The data show that around a quarter of Slovenian youth are active in firefighting societies, and just under 17 percent in the scouts.

There is no single public body responsible for volunteering in Slovenia. Different Ministries and Government Offices are involved. The Ministry of Public Administration is leading the process of drafting the new National strategy for the development of non-governmental sector and volunteering, based on Volunteering Act in Slovenia. The Ministry of Public Administration is also the key actor in promoting volunteering in Slovenia.

Voluntary work is predominantly carried out in non-governmental organisations, such as societies, private institutions, foundations, but also in some public institutions (health, social security, education). The sources of funding for voluntary activities are dispersed and little systematic information is available on this matter. The largest proportion of funds comes from governmental and municipal sources or from NGOs' own assets.

On the basis of Volunteering Act, the Government established [the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Promotion of Volunteering, Voluntary Organizations and NGOs](#). The Council monitors, identifies and assesses the situation of voluntary and non-governmental organizations and takes initiatives to encourage their development, gives suggestions for the development and adoption of regulations and measures necessary for the implementation of national policies related to voluntary and non-governmental organizations.

Slovenia has not introduced a national strategy or programme on youth volunteering. However, the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) introduces youth volunteering and encouragement of youth volunteering as its important objective. Among the priority guidelines of the Programme is to promote volunteering among young people and reduce the proportion of young people who never engage in voluntary activities.

## 2.1 General context

### Historical developments

Slovenia has a long tradition of voluntary work. In particular, volunteering is the basis of operation for fire brigade societies, societies of retired people, friends of youth societies, mountaineering and sports societies, the Red Cross, Caritas, self-help organisations and numerous other humanitarian, cultural and sports organisations. Voluntary activities are deeply rooted in our society, in particular, they are predominantly used in solving the most difficult social problems and unveiling the problems of individuals and groups where state institutions have not yet been involved, or have ceased to be. Voluntary work is predominantly carried out in non-governmental organisations, such as societies, private institutions, foundations, but also in some public institutions (health, social security, education).

The history of volunteering in Slovenia goes back to the 18th and 19th centuries, when voluntary organisations emerged in the domain of culture and education. The Church, in particular the Catholic Church, has played an important role in the development of charities and humanitarian aid. Before the Second World War, other types of voluntary organisations were also established by craftsmen who organised themselves by sector - production, finance and insurance. Estimates suggest that prior to WWII there were roughly 7,000 civil society organisations (including voluntary organisations) in existence.

However, the creation of the Socialistic Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (1943-1991) marked an important change in the development of grassroots organisations and of a voluntary sector. Many voluntary organisations were either forbidden by the State or were placed under State control. During this period, volunteering survived in various areas of activity such as humanitarian aid (for example, the fire service or the Red Cross) and in local tourism, culture and sports. The voluntary work at this time included traditional activities organised by the central administration and primarily performed by young people volunteering for sports organisations, fire brigades, and organisations involved in the protection against natural disasters.

In the 1970s a process of decentralisation began with the adoption of the new Associations Act in 1974, which marked the development of modern non-governmental organisations in Slovenia. As a result, the number of NGOs and volunteers has significantly increased from the mid-1970s onwards in what can be described as a bottom-up approach. However, despite some rejuvenation of the sector during this time, the insufficient support from the

socialist state and the general public meant that voluntary organisations remained underdeveloped. After the 1980s, new social movements emerged (promoting peace, environmental, human rights, spiritual and other movements), which in turn helped the development of the NGO sector.

Following the collapse of the socialist bloc and the process of economic transition, the importance of volunteering and the third sector began to increase significantly. This was facilitated by interventions by various national advocacy non-governmental organisations, as well as by international NGOs - for example, the Soros Foundation, which enabled the establishment of NGOs in the fields of human rights, the protection of minorities, women's rights, and ecology at national level. The process of accession to the European Union has also helped to encourage Slovenia to fully align with the European standards of dialogue and partnership with the civil society.

## Main concepts

[Volunteering Act](#) (Zakon o prostovoljstvu), adopted on 3 February 2011 by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia and amended on 21 October 2015, defines [volunteering](#) as a socially beneficial unpaid activity of individuals, who, through their work, knowledge and experience contribute to the quality of life of individuals and social groups, and to the development of a solidary, humane and equal society. Volunteering strengthens mutual solidarity of people, promote the development of human skills and lifelong learning, ensuring social cohesion and cooperation in solving the problems of individuals and society.

Volunteering Act defines organised volunteering as well as [voluntary service](#). Organized volunteering has to be in accordance with the provisions of this Act should be exercised within the framework of voluntary organizations, as defined by the first paragraph of Article 9 of this Act, and the individual work performed regularly and at least 24 hours per year. Voluntary Service is organized volunteering by a volunteer performed at least 20 hours per week over a period of at least six months without interruption.

Youth volunteering is not defined in the Slovenian legislation, apart from [the Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector](#) where youth volunteering is defined as one of the areas where youth sector is involved. Therefore, volunteering represents a vital part of the youth field and is related to many other areas, important for young people, mainly youth participation and non-formal learning. Youth participation within youth organisations, other civil society organisations, schools, etc. mainly consists of voluntary engagement. Such activities can also be characterised as non-formal learning, as they include the gaining of competence and work experience outside the framework of formal education.

## 2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

### Governance

Governmental bodies:

There is no single public body responsible for volunteering in Slovenia. Different Ministries and Government Offices are involved in this:

- Ministry of Public Administration;
- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport;
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Equal Opportunities;
- Ministry of Interior;
- Ministry of Defence; and
- Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

Overall, the roles of different ministries can be categorised in the following manner:

- [Ministry of Public Administration](#) is in charge of regulatory reform as well as horizontal issues regarding NGOs in general;
- [Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities](#) and the [Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia](#) are main promoters of volunteering in the context of social welfare and they prepare various analyses and researches on the role of volunteers included in the social welfare programmes. Here, volunteering is seen as a measure of social activation;
- a range of ministries contribute by funding volunteering and voluntary programmes; and
- a range of different ministries and governmental offices are involved in the implementation of policies and programmes in this field. Among them, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth is in charge of coordinating national programme for youth with the priority to promote volunteering among young people and reduce the proportion of young people who never engage in voluntary activities.

The Ministry of Public Administration was responsible for the process of drafting the new National strategy for the development of non-governmental sector and volunteering, based on Volunteering Act in Slovenia which was adopted in March 2018 ([Strategija razvoja nevladnih organizacij in prostovoljstva do leta 2023](#)). Their main goals are:

- to create a supportive and enabling environment for the functioning and development of non-governmental organisations (NGOs),
- to establish long-term funding for NGOs,
- to strengthen the role of NGOs in the planning and implementation of public policies at local and national level,
- to strengthen cooperation between NGOs and businesses and establishing cross-sectoral partnerships,
- to promote transparency, compliance or integrity and accountability of NGOs,
- to promote transparency, compliance or integrity and accountability of NGOs, promote solidarity and quality volunteering and the development of different forms of volunteering at local and national level.

The Strategy is implemented by all ministries and monitored by the Ministry of Public Administration.

On the basis of [Volunteering Act](#), the Government established the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Promotion of Volunteering, Voluntary Organisations and NGOs ([Svet Vlade Republike Slovenije za spodbujanje razvoja prostovoljstva, prostovoljskih in nevladnih organizacij](#)). The Ministry of Public Administrations coordinates its work.

The Council monitors, identifies and assesses the situation of voluntary and non-governmental organisations and takes initiatives to encourage their development, gives suggestions for the development and adoption of regulations and measures necessary for the implementation of national policies related to voluntary and non-governmental organisations. The Council cooperates with volunteers and NGOs and considers their positions on the proposals of laws and regulations as well as the national strategy for volunteering.

Among the main non-public actors taking part in the development of policies in the field of youth volunteering, the following organisations representing non-profit sector have been recognised:

- Slovenian Network of Voluntary Organisations ([Slovenska mreža prostovoljskih organizacij](#)) gathers more than 1300 organisations and is the largest network in

Slovenia. It was formed to promote volunteering, identify the value of voluntary activities and create an environment fertile for its development. The purpose of the network is to support organisations in organising voluntary work, to help organisations to promote their voluntary programmes and help potential volunteers to find voluntary work.

- [Slovene Philanthropy](#) is the main actor in the field of voluntary work in Slovenia and also leads the Slovenian network of voluntary organisations. It aims to promote and develop voluntary work and, in general, solidarity among people. In addition to promoting voluntary work, its core activities include helping individuals to get in touch with organisations in need of volunteers, training volunteers and supporting civic organisations. They also organise training of mentors and organisers of voluntary activities in NGOs and public institutions carrying voluntary activities. The Slovene Philanthropy together with the Slovenian Network of Voluntary Organisations are dialogue partners of the Ministry of Public Administration for issues relating to voluntarism.
- National Youth Council ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)) is a network of national youth organisations
- ute for Promotion and Recording of Informally Acquired Knowledge ([Zavod Nefiks, Inštitut za promocijo in beleženje neformalno pridobljenega znanja](#)) promotes non-formal learning and recognition of competences gained in non-formal learning activities, including voluntary activities.
- [Youth Network MaMa](#) combines and represents organisations that run youth centres or are active in youth work in Slovenia in order to support the youth, their spending of quality free time and a better life in society. On local level, youth centres are important agents in promoting voluntary work.
- [Institute Voluntariat](#) is an organisation that offers various opportunities for international voluntary work.

#### Other public bodies involved in volunteering

**Municipalities** are also involved in supporting voluntary activities. Each year (starting in 2001) Slovene Philanthropy is giving recognition awards to municipalities that are successfully supporting voluntary activities of their citizens. In 2021, 36 Slovenian municipalities received the recognition award Volunteer-friendly Municipality ([Prostovoljstvu prijazna občina](#)) for their achievements in supporting voluntary work (11 of them received the award for the first time that year). In order to become recognized in this field, municipalities can support volunteering in various ways that include:

- financial support of voluntary activities;
- joining larger local and national voluntary actions by involving mayors and other municipal workers in the voluntary activities;
- attending volunteering actions and events and through this gathering information about the needs of voluntary organisations;
- promoting voluntary work and organisations by promoting them through their own media and on their official websites;
- organising their own public events where citizens gather in voluntary actions;
- providing support in applying for international voluntary projects and collaborating with other organisations at national and international level;
- organising events with the intention to recognize, thank and award active and successful volunteers in their municipality.

Municipalities are an important actor in connecting local voluntary organisations with the state and international institutions that are supporting voluntary work. They have an important role in supporting local organisations by providing them information and

financial support in applying for projects, funded by state organisations and European Union.

According to the Volunteering Act, other public institutions can also organise volunteering on the basis of volunteering programmes and agreements with voluntary organisations. One of those institutions are also public schools that are encouraging their students to involve themselves in volunteering. Slovene philanthropy is organising [trainings](#) for primary and high school students, employees and organisations in order to encourage them to involve themselves in voluntary organisations and actions.

### **Cross-sectoral cooperation**

The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Promotion of Volunteering, Voluntary Organisations and NGOs ([Svet Vlade Republike Slovenije za spodbujanje razvoja prostovoljstva, prostovoljskih in nevladnih organizacij](#)) is a consultative body composed of representatives of public bodies and non-governmental organisations and civil society and as such represents the main form of cross-sectorial cooperation in the field. It represents a form of consultation with the non-profit sector as well as a form of cooperation between different ministries and public bodies. Balanced grounds for Council's activities are indicated by half of the Council's members being representatives of non-governmental actors (10 out of 20) and the designation of the role of the president of the Council to a representative of non-governmental organisations. The council is awarding organisations and individuals for exceptional achievements in the field of voluntary work. The award is given by the President of the Republic of Slovenia.

## **2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering**

### **Existence of a National Strategy**

Slovenia has not introduced a national strategy that would specifically consider youth volunteering, but based on the [Volunteering Act](#), the Ministry of Public Administration prepared the National strategy for the development of non-governmental sector and volunteering until 2023 ([Strategija razvoja nevladnih organizacij in prostovoljstva do leta 2023](#)) that was adopted in 2018.

Moreover, the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) introduces youth volunteering and encouragement of youth volunteering as its important objective, particularly in terms of educational potential and its contribution to the development of local communities. It emphasizes voluntary activities among young people as one of eight key areas that should be promoted and developed. Among the priority guidelines of the Programme is to promote volunteering among young people and reduce the proportion of young people who never engage in voluntary activities.

The National Programme for Youth, when it comes to youth volunteering, does not contain objectives and measures relevant to 'inclusive volunteering' and there are no specific target groups – whose participation in voluntary activities should be fostered – identified.

There is no specific law on youth volunteering in Slovenia, only the Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector ([Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#)) that introduces youth volunteering as one of the core areas of youth policy. However, volunteering has been legislated in 2011 when members of the Slovenian Parliament unanimously adopted the Volunteering Act.

[Volunteering Act](#) regulates the wider field of socially beneficial work of individuals and voluntary organisations, through their activities, knowledge and experience, in order to make a significant contribution to raising the standard of living of individuals and society as a whole. Systemic regulation of volunteering, among other things, opens up opportunities for unemployed people in volunteering.

The main objective of the Act is to provide an overview of organised volunteering and to determine the basis of a systematic evaluation and development of voluntary work as well as to determine the state's role in the promotion, development and system support of volunteering.

The Act of 2011 was followed by some other legislation documents that more precisely define the implementation of the Act. They define areas of voluntary work and regulate in detail the scope of rewarding the volunteers and volunteer organisations, including:

- Rules on voluntary work areas and Register (Official Gazette of RS, No. 48/11, 60/11 amendments and supplements) (Pravilnik o področjih prostovoljskega dela in vpisniku ([Uradni list RS, št. 48/11](#) in [60/11](#) – popr.));
- Regulation on detailed arrangements to grant awards and recognitions of the Republic of Slovenia for volunteering (Official Gazette of RS, No. 62/11) (Uredba o nagradi in priznanjih za prostovoljstvo ([Uradni list RS, št. 62/11](#)));
- Rules governing the method of work of the Committee of the RS for the award in volunteering and its expert committees set out in the Volunteering Act (Official Gazette of RS, No. 10/11, 16/11 amendments and supplements and 82/15) (Zakon o prostovoljstvu ([Uradni list RS št. 10/11](#) in [16/11](#) – popr. in [82/15](#))).

The amendment to the Volunteering Act has been adopted in 2015 and simplified the reporting on a completed volunteer work, eliminated additional administrative burdens and made easier the provision of voluntary work in public entities or by private persons that perform public service. Volunteering Act consists of eight parts:

- The aim and the definition of volunteering are explained in the first part of the Act.
- The concepts and terms, including volunteering, volunteer and volunteer organisation are included in the second part.
- The third part presents the principles of non-discrimination in the field of organised volunteering, the protection of users of voluntary work, the non-exploitation of volunteers, the protection of children and free nature of volunteering.
- The fourth part of the Act defines the conditions for voluntary work, including the agreement about voluntary work and its content, guidelines how to use the Code of Obligations ([Obligacijski zakonik](#)), termination and cancellation of an agreement.
- The fifth part of the Act defines rights and obligations of volunteers and voluntary organisations when implementing organised voluntary work. It includes articles on rights and obligations of volunteers, their possibility to complain and the necessary step to asses a complain, the insurance of a volunteer in case of unemployment, liabilities of voluntary organisations and its responsibility for any damage caused. It also prescribes the guidelines of an appropriate training, requires mentoring and predicts an award for special achievements of a volunteer.
- Promotion and monitoring of organised volunteering are described in the sixth part of the Act. It predicts sustainable development of voluntary work in the field of education, new strategy of voluntary work and support for promotion and development of voluntary work. In addition, it defines the subscription of voluntary organisations in the official register of voluntary organisations and their responsibility of reporting. It presents committee and guidelines for nomination of awards for volunteers and it also defines funding for awards which needs to be ensured in the State budget. Moreover, it includes a necessity of awarding by local communities.
- The final provisions, responsibilities and monitoring of the act are defined, including penal provisions.

There is no ethical note included in the Act, voluntary work is regarded as a social phenomenon, integrated in the society. The act is focused on organisation of voluntary work, including terms for voluntary organisations and rights and responsibilities of key actors.



Moreover, some other strategic public documents refer to volunteering (but not particularly to youth volunteering):

- The National Social Protection Programme 2013-2020 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013-2020](#)) emphasises that the Government supports the development of voluntary work. By setting up a uniform system of social protection and by stimulating the development of voluntary work, charity, self-help and donorship, the state is to provide better direct financial support and encourage the development of non-governmental organisations as well as the private sector.
- The National Sports Programme in the Republic of Slovenia 2014-2023 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu športa v Republiki Sloveniji za obdobje 2014-2023](#)) particularly addresses the support for the training of voluntary workers. Voluntary work is also stated as one of the means of financing the sports.
- According to the Resolution on the National Programme in the Field of Narcotic Drugs 2014 – 2020 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu na področju prepovedanih drog 2014-2020](#)), voluntary work done by NGOs should become a common preventive measure in this area in the local community and civil society.

Other official documents containing guidelines on youth volunteering

The Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector ([Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#)), adopted on 18 May 2010 by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, introduces youth volunteering as one of fields of youth policy implementation.

The Organisation and Financing of Education Act ([Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja](#)) and the Gimnazije Act ([Zakon o gimnazijah](#)) both adopted in February 1996 by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, as well as Vocational Education Act ([Zakon o poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju](#)) from 2006, provide an adequate room for voluntary activities. In general secondary schools, organised voluntary (social) work is part of a compulsory elective contents ([obvezne izbirne vsebine](#)) and in vocational schools is optional compulsory elective content. Volunteering is also an optional activity in elementary schools.

The non-governmental organisation [Slovene Philanthropy, Association for the Promotion of Voluntary Work](#), continues to provide schools with professional assistance for training volunteers under the national network.

Various aspects of volunteerism, but not specifically youth volunteering, are also regulated in other laws. In general, there are about 25 legal regulations that pertain to volunteers and volunteering. These include: Law on Social Security, Law on Organisations for People with Disabilities, Law on Humanitarian Organisations, The Law on the Red Cross in Slovenia, Law on Protection Against Natural Disasters, Law on Fire Brigades, Act on the Supply of Blood, Law on Labour Relations, Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Act on Foreigners, The Law on Health Care and Health Insurance, etc. There are also specific regulations pertaining to volunteers in sports, culture, and social protection.

## Scope and contents

National Strategy for the development of non-governmental organisations and volunteering until 2023 ([Strategija razvoja nevladnih organizacij in prostovoljstva do leta 2023](#)) was adopted in May 2018. The main objectives addressed by the strategy are:

- establish a supportive environment for the functioning and development of NGOs;
- establish long-term funding NGOs;
- strengthen the role of NGOs in the planning and implementation of public policies at local and national level;
- strengthen the cooperation of NGOs and the economy and establish cross-sectoral partnerships (economy, NGOs, public administration);

- promote transparency, integrity and accountability of NGOs;
- promote solidarity and quality volunteering and the development of various forms of volunteering at local and national level.

The strategy barely includes youth and therefore cannot really be deemed as the youth volunteering strategy, however, it does systematically address volunteering in Slovenia as a whole.

In addition, the preparation of the National Strategy for the development of non-governmental sector and volunteering is in line with the following documents:

- Coalition Agreement on Cooperation in the Government of the Republic of Slovenia 2018-2022;
- partnership agreement between Slovenia and the European Commission 2014-2020 and Operational Programme for the implementation of European Cohesion Policy 2014-2020;
- Volunteering Act;
- Public administration development strategy 2015-2020;
- Strategy for Development of Local Self-Government;
- Strategic Framework of Slovenia 2050.

### Responsible authority

Ministry of Public Administration was responsible for the coordination of preparation of the National Strategy for the development of non-governmental sector and volunteering ([Strategija razvoja nevladnih organizacij in prostovoljstva do leta 2023](#)). The strategy was adopted by the National Assembly in 2018.

Relevant ministries report to the Office for Youth because monitoring and evaluation of the National Youth Strategy are under its jurisdiction. The interim report is to be submitted to the National Assembly every three years, whereas the final report is to be submitted after the expiry of the validity of the National Youth Programme. An evaluation (interim or final) of the Programme has yet to be performed.

The responsible public body for implementing the National Youth Strategy 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) is the [Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth](#).

### Revisions/ Updates

- The National Youth Strategy ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) containing references to youth volunteering has not yet been revised.
- National Strategy for the development of non-governmental sector and volunteering by 2023 ([Strategija razvoja nevladnih organizacij in prostovoljstva do leta 2023](#)) was adopted in March 2018 and has not yet been revised.
- The new Resolution on the national social assistance programme 2022-2030 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2022-2030](#)) is in preparation.

## 2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

### National Programme for Youth Volunteering

There is no National programme for Youth Volunteering in Slovenia.

### Funding

The sources of funding for voluntary activities are dispersed and little systematic information is available on this matter.

The largest proportion of funds comes from governmental and municipal sources or from NGOs' own assets. The projects are mostly financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

Major sources of financing voluntary work are the following:

- National Social Security Programme that takes into account the activity of the non-government sector and volunteers' activity as an integral part of social security system;
- Concessions granted by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities for social assistance programmes of non-government and private sectors;
- Public tenders for the co-financing of youth programmes and programmes of youth organisations issued by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth;
- Tax relief for humanitarian and charity contributions;
- Contributions by local community, municipal budget;
- "Erasmus+" Programme;
- Foundation for Financing Disabled People's and Humanitarian Organisations (FIHO) with National Lottery funds;
- Foundation for financing sports organisations;
- Membership fees of the organisations;
- Donations from businesses or profit-making sector, sponsorships.

Another source of financing voluntary organisations is stipulated by the Personal Income Tax Act ([Zakon o dohodnini](#)) which states that 0.5% of income may be taxed and directed to financing activities of general public benefit (Article 142). This is a new source of funding for voluntary organisations carrying out non-profit activities in the public interest, i.e. organisations for human rights protection, protection against natural and other disasters, organisations for people with disabilities, charitable, ecological, cultural, sports, religious and other purpose organisations.

There is data on public financing of non-governmental organisations, although not all of them are registered as voluntary organisations, based on records provided by the State Treasury cash flows, including ministries, government departments, agencies, municipalities, and other public bodies.

According to data provided by the [Centre for information service, co-operation and development of NGOs](#), non-governmental organisations received 166.8 million EUR of public funds in 2003, which incrementally increased to 282.6 million EUR in 2015 and to 416.0 million EUR in 2020. In 2020, over 394 million EUR were allocated from direct and indirect budget users (ministries, municipalities, public agencies and institutions), 21.6 million EUR by the Foundation for Funding Humanitarian and Disabled People's Organisations (FIHO) and the Foundation for Financing Sports Organisations in the Republic of Slovenia (FSO). According to the same source, 15,198 non-governmental organisations managed to receive public funds in 2020.

Table 1: Scope of public funding of non-governmental organisations in 2009, and 2017-2020 in EUR

funders/year	2009	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ministries	78.367.362,86	85.260.689,57	99.915.370,41	129.490.338,09	180.965.462,59
Municipalities	91.694.914,82	112.328.563,22	115.389.777,15	118.145.248,13	114.787.964,93

Other public institutions	68.394.840,98	88.068.700,57	91.545.129,61	97.196.556,32	91.356.499,30
Financial administration of the Republic of Slovenia (mainly assets from 0.5% of personal income tax)	3.178.250,65	4.186.317,25	4.564.739,84	4.729.002,67	7.337.600,31
FIHO and FŠO	30.153.292,80	20.863.839,70	21.743.621,32	22.565.949,57	21.595.961,39
Total	271.788.662,11	310.708.110,31	333.158.638,33	372.127.094,78	416.043.488,52

Source: [Centre for information service, co-operation and development of NGOs](#)

## Characteristics of youth volunteering

Many young people take part in voluntary activities. Such activities, in keeping with other findings (Pichler, 2006), raise general life satisfaction (7.22 among those who have not taken part during the last year, compared to 7.51 for those who have). (see [Youth 2013](#)). The survey "[Youth 2010, The Social Profile of Young People in Slovenia](#)" included several indicators of young people's voluntary activities, and they all fall into the basic conceptual framework of voluntary activities and civil society participation: 1) non-formal work or activities, generally in cooperation with others, in order to deal with specific issues, and 2) membership in voluntary societies and organisations.

According to the survey, Slovenian youth are more active in activities linked to the safety and upkeep of the location where the respondent resides (68.6 percent of young people), and to youth interests and young people (67.2 percent). The data also show that around a quarter of Slovenian youth are active in firefighting societies, and just under 17 percent in the scouts. The survey checked the extent to which Slovenian youth (compared to EU-27 youth) are members of voluntary organisations. Slovenian youth are in two types of organisation that have the most members: sports/recreation organisations and cultural organisations. Among Slovenian youth the only notably lower membership is in political parties which might be due to a low level of trust in political officials and institutions, low conventional participation and so forth. According to the survey "Youth 2020: The position of young people in Slovenia" ([Mladina 2020: Položaj mladih v Sloveniji](#)), 27.9 percent of Slovenian youth have already participated in voluntary activities.

The key findings of the survey "Youth 2010" can be summarised in the following points:

1. Compared to 1995, Slovenian youth are significantly more active in the voluntary sphere.
2. Out of all forms of participation, young people are most frequently involved in voluntary activities. In addition to involvement in employment and education, voluntary activities are the main mechanism for social inclusion in Slovenia.
3. In the past 15 years there has been a major increase in the willingness of students to participate in actions that improve the status of young people.
4. Voluntary activities are mainly associated with the more adjusted psychosocial development of young people. A willingness to help peers and older people is associated primarily with indicators of more adjusted development, while membership in voluntary societies is generally associated with negative indicators of development.
5. Being female, older, living in an urban environment, higher educational qualifications of the respondent and higher economic status of the family are factors that positively influence most forms of voluntarism.

Political and voluntary activities are relatively strongly associated positively with each other. The 2018 Yearly Report on volunteerism in Slovenia ([Skupno poročilo o prostovoljstvu v Republiki Sloveniji za leto 2018](#)), prepared by the Ministry of Public Administration which is responsible for the monitoring of voluntary organisations, as based on the Volunteering Act, showed that volunteers under 18 years carry out 13% of all registered volunteer hours (in 2017: 12%, 2016: 7%, 2015: 2%) and volunteers aged 18 to 30 years 20% (in 2017: 18%, 2016: 29%, 2015: 13%). These data are based on the data from organisations that are enrolled in the official registry. It is assumed that the percentage of young volunteers is much higher, but the youth organisations are not enrolled in the registry, mainly due to the lack of financial and human resources for administration, and therefore they are not included in the official statistics.

In 2009, the Office for Youth, together with the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, prepared an analysis of inclusion of young people in voluntary activities (see report in [Slovene](#)). These data show much higher involvement of young people compared to older generations in regular voluntary activities (participation at least once a week).

Inclusion of volunteers by age (in percentages)

	Up to 29 Years	From 30 to 60 years	Older than 60	Total
At least once a week	5,9	5,4	3,9	5,1
At least once a month	3,5	9,6	6,4	7,3
At least once in three months	4,7	5,5	4,1	5,0
At least once in six months	9,4	9,4	4,1	8,1
Not so often	15,8	9,3	6,9	10,2
Never	60,7	60,8	74,6	64,3
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Helping others (in percentages)

	Up to 29 Years	From 30 to 60 years	Older than 60	Total
At least once a week	29,1	26,7	21,5	26,0
At least once a month	27,4	28,3	20,4	26,0
At least once in three months	14,1	14,5	9,5	13,1
At least once in six months	11,2	11,3	9,5	10,8
Not so often	10,3	6,0	9,5	7,9
Never	7,9	13,2	29,6	16,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

## Support to young volunteers

[The Volunteering Act](#) includes two important aspects: on one hand the economic impact in the form of refunding material expenses, rewarding and comparison of volunteers, and on the other hand it states among the benefits of voluntary work the acquisition of new knowledge and experience and thus provides a measure of the educational impact of volunteering.

The costs associated with volunteering that can be reimbursed include travel to and from the place of volunteering, travel while volunteering, meals (when work lasts more than four hours), accommodation, postage, phone calls, stationery etc., and cost of protective clothing/special equipment. The Volunteering Act obliges voluntary organisation to sign an agreement with a volunteer in order to specify all the cost that will be reimbursed, so the reimbursement of expenses related to volunteers' activity is left at the discretion of the host organisation.

Under the Slovenian tax law reimbursements for food, accommodation or any other expenses related to the voluntary activity (e.g. travel cost) as well as the volunteer allowance, are not subject to taxation as long as the volunteer does not receive any type of financial remuneration or award from the voluntary organisation. If the volunteer receives such financial award or remuneration, then both received income and reimbursements are subject to taxation.

According to the Personal Income Tax Act, tax exemption applies to "revenues intended to cover documented costs of transport, subsistence and accommodation, when the payment is made to a volunteer individual or person respondent to an invitation or call to participate in various activities - amateur, voluntary, humanitarian or charitable activities, educational training, health, humanitarian, cultural, sports, research, trade union activities, activities carried out by chambers, religious communities and political parties, provided that the said activities are non-profit and voluntary, or carried out on the basis of an invitation or call to participate in activities of associations and unions" (Article 107). The activities need to be in line with the objectives or purposes for which the societies are established, and should not seek financial profits.

A foreign volunteer who is included in organised voluntary activity is entitled to receive the compensation for personal expenses if this was agreed with volunteer's sending organisation or is part of the international treaty that promotes international exchanges of volunteers.

The amendment to the Personal Income Tax Act provides that Slovenian volunteers who are sent to voluntary services abroad are entitled to the tax-free allowance for personal expenses, but it must be part of the agreement between hosting and sending organisation or part of the international treaty or European or international programme that defines these benefits.

For health insurance, the Volunteering Act states that volunteer organisations must pay health insurance for volunteers carrying out organised voluntary work if these activities constitute a danger to the health of life of a volunteer, or if health insurance is part of an agreement. However, this is not a major issue as all people legally resident in Slovenia, including students, unemployed, employed and retired persons, benefit from the obligatory health insurance which covers the basic rights. Students and employees also benefit from specific insurance policies.

According to specific laws, e.g. Law on Fire Brigades, Law on Protection against Natural and Other Disasters as well as Healthcare and Health Insurance Act, volunteers are entitled to insurance. However, as the above-mentioned strand of legislation suggests, the obligation of insurance only pertains to certain specific volunteers.

With regard to other insurance benefits, volunteers do not benefit from pension and disability insurance (as it is the case for the employed), unemployment insurance, parent care insurance, work accident insurance and professional disease insurance.

## Quality Assurance

Supervision of the implementation of the provisions of the Volunteering Act is in hands of different competent authorities: Ministry of Public Administration (inspectors), Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (inspectors), [Information Commissioner](#).

There are no official documents defining quality standards in the field of youth volunteering in Slovenia. Minimum obligations of organisations when sending and receiving volunteers have been defined by the legislation within the Volunteering Act. Inter alia, the Volunteering Act regulates involvement of young people under age of 15 who can engage in voluntary activities only if these activities contribute to their educational and personal development, if they do not pose a threat to their health and do not prevent them to fulfil school obligations. In addition, Article 11 of the Volunteering Act advises voluntary organisation to place additional precautions when organising activities that involve people with special needs or vulnerable groups.

Monitoring of the implementation of the Volunteering Act, in accordance with its Article 49, is done by inspectors of the Ministry of Public Administrations. Information Commissioner of the Republic of Slovenia monitors the protection of personal data.

In 2006, the cooperation between various voluntary organisations resulted in the development of a Volunteering Ethics Code ([Etični kodeks organiziranega prostovoljstva](#)), which contains basic guidelines and minimum standards that volunteers and their organisations are encouraged to comply with. The Code gives basic instructions for voluntary work, applicable to all types of voluntary organisations and volunteers. By signing the Code, an organisation obtains the right to use the logo of Volunteering as a symbol of the quality of their work, which is awarded by the Centre for the Development and Promotion of Voluntary Work of the Slovene Philanthropy.

The Code of Ethics was developed with the assistance of a large number of different organisations and experts in the voluntary sector. The initiative benefitted from the support of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. As of 2 December 2019, 1453 organisations out of more than 1600 which are included in the volunteering network had signed the Code of Ethics.

Amongst other things, the Code emphasises the following:

- respect of confidentiality of personal data;
- working for the best interest of the user;
- no exploitation of power by a volunteer or an organisation;
- active participation of users;
- concern for the integrity, dignity and respect for all the involved (volunteers, users and organisations);
- concern for the reputation of voluntary work.

The Code also specifies that volunteers have the right:

- to be informed about their work and voluntary organisation;
- to be familiarised with the work;
- to get the support and acknowledgement of their work;
- to be provided with opportunities of learning and advancement at work;
- to be given the opportunity to say their opinion and participate in the decision-making;
- to be given the opportunity to participate in the organisation of voluntary work;
- to have expenses reimbursed; and

- to benefit from insurance.

There is a registry of organisations offering volunteering opportunities to volunteers. The legal basis for the registry is the Volunteering Act which in its Article 38 defines that all NGOs carrying out voluntary work have a right to enter the official registry. The electronic registry of voluntary organisations and organisations organising voluntary programmes contains the following information: registration number of a legal person and its data, the activity of a legal person and dates when an organisation entered the registry. Once a year the registered organisations need to submit a report on volunteering, including data on the number of volunteers by gender and age groups and the total number of volunteers' hours depending on the type of volunteer work. Reports are submitted to the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services for the purpose of national statistics. Aggregated data on volunteer work in Slovenia are submitted to the Ministry of Public Administration, which prepares a yearly report on the situation of volunteering in Slovenia and sends it to the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for its information.

The Ministry of Public Administration is mainly responsible for QA of voluntary activities. In general, the voluntary organisations under the provision of the Volunteering Act are obliged to provide training and tutoring if it is necessary due to the nature of voluntary work, or if the volunteer expressed the need for training. Voluntary organisations have no obligation to report about their quality assurance schemes to the competent ministries, unless their programmes are subject to co-financing from funds based on public calls for specific programmes.

### **Target groups**

No specific target groups within the youth population are defined in the official documents in Slovenia apart from the Article 18 of the Volunteering Act which requires a legal representative or custodian to sign a volunteer agreement if a child is under the age of 15.

However, the promotion of volunteering specifically among primary and high school students is included in The National Youth Strategy where the proportion of people that belong to those groups are used as an indicator in measuring the voluntary activities of youth.

## **2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes**

### **EU programmes**

Slovenia has not developed any cross-border mobility programme. The EU Erasmus+ programme is the most important, because it represents the beginning of a legal possibility to support such projects and their respective goals, in pursuance of which an increasing number of players in the youth field prepare international youth activities (youth exchange, the project of European Voluntary Service) as a constituent part of their regular yearly programmes. Similarly, a growing number of players in the youth field make use of the international aspect of projects as an important - otherwise unattainable in domestic and local environment - educational dimension and a method to fulfil their educational mission among youth target groups.

Slovenia is also involved in the [European Solidary Corps](#) project which is an initiative by the European Union that promotes solidarity and creates volunteering possibilities for young people in their own countries and abroad. By August 2019 there was already more than 200 volunteer jobs secured within ESC programme.

There is no systematic monitoring of youth participation in EU programmes related to youth volunteering besides Institute MOVIT's (Erasmus+, Youth in Action National Agency) regular reporting procedures and special publications (see [Journal Mladje](#)). However, general trends related to youth participation in European volunteering programmes are



monitored by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth through its periodic evaluations of the Erasmus+, Youth in Action programme.

## Other Programmes

The [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia](#) has published [a call](#) for international development and humanitarian projects that will be implemented by Slovenian NGOs between 2020-2022. The call for proposals is divided into three sections: 1. development projects in the Western Balkans in the field of equality of women; 2. projects in the field of educating children about their rights through the use of Our Rights materials in the Western Balkans or North Africa; and 3. implementation of humanitarian projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.

## Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

Aliens Act ([Zakon o tujcih](#)), adopted on 15 June 2011 by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, is important for foreigners interested in carrying out voluntary work in Slovenia. In the case of a foreign volunteer residing in Slovenia for more than 90 days that is subject to a visa, a permit for temporary residence is required which may be issued for different purposes including his or her participation in the programmes of trans-national exchange of volunteers (Article 30). However, a foreign volunteer who wish to reside in the Republic of Slovenia should have a valid travel document whose period of validity must exceed the intended period of stay in the Republic of Slovenia by at least three months; they should also have an appropriate health insurance certificate and sufficient funds for subsistence during their stay in the country or their subsistence shall be guaranteed otherwise (Article 27).

The employment and work article of the Aliens Act makes no mention of volunteers but its application is essential for the work of foreign volunteers in Slovenia. This Act does not apply to foreigners that carry out not-for-profit activity within organised youth camps and other periodical forms of trans-national cooperation of young people organised by the authorized organisations, schools, institutions, ministries or local communities, to foreigners who perform clerical jobs for legally recognised religious communities, and aliens who organise or run charitable and humanitarian activities within registered organisations and religious communities.

## 2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

### Information providers

Ministry of Public Administration is the key actor in promoting volunteering in Slovenia. Based on the Volunteering Act which gives an important emphasis to the promotion of volunteering, the Ministry till 2012 published a yearly call for financing networks of non-governmental organisations and promoting volunteering with the following objectives: development and enforcement of various models for the promotion of volunteering in the economy, public administration and non-governmental organisations, setting up a system of networking with businesses and NGOs, promoting e-volunteering (introducing new models of e-volunteering, promotion of e-volunteering, etc. In August 2019, the Ministry published [a call](#) for financing supportive environment for NGO development 2019-2023. For this purpose, European social funds are also used. In May 2019, the Ministry published a call for financing development and professionalization of non-governmental organisations and volunteering.

The main organisation that promotes volunteering in Slovenia is [the Slovene Philanthropy](#), which is an NGO. It aims to promote and develop voluntary work and, in general, solidarity among people. In addition to promoting voluntary work, its core activities include helping individuals to get in touch with organisations in need of volunteers, training volunteers and supporting civic organisations. Furthermore, it organises the following events:

- Volunteering Forum ([Forum prostovoljstva](#)): every second year;
- Slovenian Volunteering Congress ([Slovenski kongres prostovoljstva](#)): every second year, lasting two days;
- Seminars and trainings for organisers of voluntary work ([Uvodna usposabljanja za mentorje in organizatorje prostovoljskega dela](#));
- National Volunteering Week ([Nacionalni teden prostovoljstva](#)).

Since 2004, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has supported programme "[Development and Promotion of volunteering in Slovenia](#)". The programme is implemented by Slovene Philanthropy and is also verified by the [Social Chamber of Slovenia](#). The programme aims to provide professional support for quality volunteering, encourage recognition of volunteering, develop new forms of volunteering with regards to society needs and enhance professionalization of mentors and organisers of voluntary activities. For people in need, this programme offers support to find suitable help from volunteers and it also helps voluntary organisations to find volunteers. Moreover, with professionalization and recognition of volunteering, the programme particularly helps humanitarian and social protection organisations which run voluntary activities. At the same time the programme offers citizens an opportunity to be actively involved in social activities, provides greater social inclusion of individuals, in particular of vulnerable groups, promotes solidarity and empowers an individual who gains new skills and experiences through voluntary engagement.

Slovene Philanthropy also leads a [Slovenian network](#) of more than 1300 voluntary organisations. The Slovenian Network of Voluntary Organisations was formed to promote volunteering, identify the value of voluntary activities and create an environment fertile for its development.

The portal [Prostovoljstvo.org](#) helps voluntary organisations to connect with each other across the country. Inclusion in the network and information system is open to all interested voluntary organisations. The portal offers promotion of vacant voluntary activities and helps volunteers to find an activity.

The portal [Mlad.si](#) (established by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth) is developed as a central communication centre with the aim of establishing a comprehensive and sustainable system for informing the public in the youth sector and outside. The portal is intended for all youth organisations, young people, individuals working with young people, representatives of the state and local communities, the media and the general public and also contains information about the possibilities of voluntary work and connects organisations that are involved in this field.

At the invitation of the Ministry of Public Administration, the Centre for the Promotion of Voluntary Work ([Posredovalnica prostovoljskih del](#)) serves as an "administrator", providing voluntary organisations and volunteers with various forms of support, such as:

- information and counselling;
- educational opportunities and exchange of experience;
- participation in joint promotion of volunteering; and
- cooperation in strengthening civil dialogue and systemic regulation of volunteering.

Other organisations that promote volunteering directly or indirectly include the following organisations (the list is not exhaustive):

- The Youth Council of Slovenia ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)): since 2002, the Youth Council organises the event "Volunteer of the Year". The volunteers of the year receive the award from the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
- MOVIT - Institute for Promotion of Youth Mobility ([MOVIT – Zavod za razvoj mobilnosti mladih](#)) performs the tasks of national agency under the European Community

programme Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps and promotes European Solidarity Corps' activities on webpage and on social media (Facebook).

- [Network of youth centres MaMa](#) which encourages youth volunteering among youth centres and on local level. Youth centres enable young people to obtain information on various possibilities for carrying out voluntary work, organise different voluntary work projects, offer training to volunteers and in many cases also act as operators of voluntary work programmes at schools, in social work centres and other public institutions.
- [CNVOS - Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs](#). It was established in early 2001 as an independent, non-profit and non-governmental organisation. The aim of 27 organisations who founded CNVOS is to empower NGOs in Slovenia, promote their role in the civil society, and ensure the realisation of their objectives, including the development of volunteering.
- [Institute Voluntariat](#) is an organisation that offers various opportunities for international voluntary work.
- MISSS - Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia ([MISSS – Mladinsko informativno svetovalno središče Slovenije](#)) develops and provides information and counseling, non-formal education and training, and promotes active participation and volunteer work.
- [SLOGA](#) - The Association of Slovenian Societies, whose members are numerous societies that work with volunteers, organises an important promotional event every year under the framework of the Global Youth Service Day.

Important providers of information are regional partners of Eurodesk info service. Eurodesk is a free infoservice of the European Commission dedicated to young people and youth workers. In 2007, Eurodesk Slovenia established a network of regional partners, which in 2015 expanded, strengthened and re-established the network's operation. Eurodesk Slovenia operates with one regional partner in each Slovenian region. The role of regional partners is primarily to provide young people with information on the opportunities for mobility of young people in Europe and information on European youth policy, thus promoting the participation of young people. There are 13 partners in Slovenia.

## Key initiatives

*"National Awards for Special Achievements in Volunteering" ([Državna nagrada za izjemne dosežke na področju prostovoljstva](#))*

The awards have the aim to increase the recognition of volunteering in the Slovene society. Committee of the Republic of Slovenia gives out awards for special achievements in volunteering. Each year the nominees are selected on the basis of the criteria set out in the in the Volunteering Act (Official Gazette of RS, No. 10/11, 16/11 amendments and supplements and 82/15) and Regulation on detailed arrangements to grant awards and recognitions of the Republic of Slovenia for volunteering (Official Gazette of RS, No. 62/11)

*"Volunteer of the Year" ([Prostovoljec leta](#))*

Youth organisations significantly contribute to the stimulation of young people to be involved in voluntary work. Every year, the Youth Council of Slovenia organises a well-received event "Volunteer of the Year", in which several organisations take part. The volunteers of the year receive the awards from the Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

*"National Volunteering Week" ([Nacionalni teden prostovoljstva](#))*

During the National Volunteering Week, before the Festival of Volunteering, two main events are organised:

- Ceremonial Volunteer Day, where awards “Hero of Our Time” are granted to school children who, through their volunteer work, contributed significantly to the quality of life at school or in the local community.
- Happy Volunteering Day is the main event organised in the capital of Ljubljana where more than 100 voluntary organisations present themselves. Among them, one third come from youth or school sector.
- Beside the two main events in Ljubljana, local events are organised throughout Slovenia, traditionally in Maribor and Nova Gorica but also elsewhere.

*“Youth-Friendly Voluntary Organisation” Award ([Mladim prostovoljcem prijazna organizacija](#))*

An award provided by the Slovenian Network of Voluntary Organisations can be granted to all organisations which provide a quality mentorship to young volunteers under the age of 18. The [list of organisations](#) who obtained this award is available on the volunteer platform [Prostovoljstvo.org](#).

*Fruits of society ([Sadeži družbe](#))*

Fruits of society is a project that promotes volunteering and intergenerational cooperation, and strengthens ties between young people and the elderly. It is a project of education in tolerance, solidarity and mutual understanding. The foundation of the project is the volunteering of young people for elderly who live at home, and on the other hand, of the elderly for young people by connecting schools and pensioners' societies. Other organisations, already implementing similar intergenerational projects, are also invited to partake in the project. The aim of the project is to promote intergenerational cooperation through the connection among primary and secondary schools with pensioners' associations and other voluntary organisations and societies involving older people. Primary and secondary schools, boarding schools, youth and student organisations, all pensioners' associations and other voluntary organisations involving older people can participate.

## 2.7 Skills recognition

### Policy Framework

There are two main legally acceptable ways for recognition of non-formal learning in Slovenia: the first is through recognition of non-formal knowledge, skills and competence within the formal education system – through continuing interrupted education, continuing on higher levels of education, changing direction/sector in education etc. – when educational institutions recognise the acquired knowledge on the basis of relevant legislation and credit system (e.g. University of Ljubljana’s rules and procedures related to recognition of non-formally acquired knowledge and skills [‘Pravilnik o postopku in merilih za priznavanje neformalno pridobljenega znanja in spretnosti’](#)) and the second is through the [National Vocational Qualifications System](#) (Sistem nacionalne poklicne kvalifikacije) when non-formally acquired knowledge and skills is recognised by the labour market under the facilitation of the [Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training](#) (Center Republike Slovenije za poklicno izobraževanje).

In the procedure of recognition of non-formal learning and by assessment of knowledge, the comparability of a candidate’s non-formally obtained knowledge, skills and competences with standards of knowledge is proven. For the labour market needs, Slovenia established a formalized system of national vocational qualifications. Here the standards established at national level in the forms of [Occupational Standards and Catalogues of Standards for Technical Knowledge and Skills](#) are compared with candidates’ acquired knowledge and experience.

For further inclusion of candidates in the formal education system, educational standards are used (catalogues of knowledge, modules and current curriculum), based on education

system which allows candidates to obtain recognition of learning acquired through different learning paths.

A recent educational reform has also given voluntary work an important place in the educational system. Voluntary work is now part of the compulsory curricula in general secondary level schools and certain types of high schools (with international baccalaureate). Pupils need to do voluntary work for a certain number of hours per year and they receive a certificate for it. These certificates however do not facilitate their entrance to further education courses.

The Volunteering Act imposes an obligation on organisations to keep a register of the performed voluntary work and acquired knowledge and skills for every volunteer. On a volunteer's request, a volunteer organisation must issue a certificate on acquired knowledge and skills upon the completion of the volunteering period (see Article 24 of the [Act](#)).

## Existing arrangements

It is very important for young people that the non-formal knowledge and skills gained through youth work (volunteering or student work), are adequately recorded. A recording system for volunteering was introduced through the Volunteering Act. Appropriate recording of non-formal and informal learning has a multi-value in society today. It exceeds the dissemination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, being also an important tool for greater integration of the individual in community life. There are a series of examples of good practice, such as Nefiks – System of recording non-formally acquired knowledge ([Nefiks – Sistem za beleženje neformalno pridobljenega znanja](#)), [My experiences – a tool for validation and recognition of working experience, gained by student work](#), [Learning badges – Utilization of open digital badges to value and recognize learning during non-formal learning activities](#) and others. These tools are being developed in different contexts (international learning mobility, increasing employability, etc.) and different channels (youth work, volunteer, student work, full-time employment ...).

In promoting the recognition of the non-formal education of young people, Nefiks, a partner project of the Institute Nefiks ([Zavod Nefiks](#)) and the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth is widely used. At its essence, Nefiks is based on the idea that the non-formal education of young people, carried out at different levels and organised by various institutions, needs to be given more recognition. The main aim is to establish a uniform system of validating knowledge and experience acquired in a non-formal manner by Slovenian young people working in Slovenia and abroad. For this reason, a record book of non-formal learning was introduced to collect the acquired knowledge and experience. It is designed for various users (secondary school and university students, unemployed and any other persons of 14 years of age and above) and it serves for recording knowledge from six different fields:

- knowledge acquired through engagement as active citizens and serious work on projects;
- knowledge acquired through work (through student employment brokerage services);
- knowledge acquired through organised forms of education (courses and seminars);
- knowledge acquired in camps;
- knowledge acquired through voluntary work;
- other ways of acquiring knowledge.

## 2.8 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

There are no other relevant current developments related to youth volunteering.

## Ongoing debates

A [call](#) for external evaluators of Erasmus+: Youth in Action and the European Solidarity Unit has been launched with the aim of increasing the pool of external evaluators for evaluating the roles of projects and final reports in Erasmus+: Youth in Action; and for evaluation of applications for the quality label, project applications and final reports in the European Solidarity Unit programme.

As regards the recognition of skills, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport wants to make a space for an in-depth discussion about recording of non-formally and informally acquired skills. The Ministry set up a working group with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, the Ministry of Public Administration and other key actors from the education system and public, private and non-governmental sectors with the following aims:

- a) to ensure the credibility of recording by improving the quality and verifiability of information;
- b) to ensure the visibility of recording systems, both for potential users and those who provide recording tools;
- c) ensuring greater interoperability between systems by providing a common platform;
- d) ensuring the recognition of the system by the state.

## 3. EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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The situation of the young in Slovenia is defined primarily by the combination of considerable family support and prolonged inclusion in the (relatively socially-oriented and friendly) education system on the one hand, and the extremely uncertain labour market conditions on the other. What was particularly disturbing was the rapid growth in the share of unemployed graduates. Young people in Slovenia usually enter the labour market after concluding their education, and thus the majority of young people actively start seeking a job after the age of 20, especially in the latter half of their 20s. Due to their active presence in the education system, there are very few employed people below the age of 20. Statistics indicate that young people's employment situation has been improving (youth unemployment has been gradually declining since), yet in 2020 the youth unemployment has slightly increased again, being now comparable to the percentage of young unemployed in the year 2017. In general young people remain one of the most vulnerable groups on the labour market.

Less secure and more flexible forms of employment have replaced traditional forms of permanent employment, e.g. student labour is the most common form of flexible youth employment. The new labour legislation enacted in 2013 introduced the concept of flexicurity. Flexibility is becoming more common in the Slovenian labour market; fixed-term jobs (with contracts that typically last three months to one year) are increasing in popularity.

There is no single public body responsible for youth employment and entrepreneurship in Slovenia. Different ministries and government offices are involved in the implementation of policies and programmes to address this issue, such as the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Equal Opportunities; the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology; the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Employment Service of Slovenia. To fight against youth unemployment, the Slovenian government developed an active employment policy. Through programmes to foster employment, the ESS enables subsidies or partial reimbursement of expenses to be provided to employers for hiring new employees.

To foster entrepreneurship among youth, the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 was created in order to help youths begin their careers. Young entrepreneurs also receive a lot of information and financial incentives from the Slovene Enterprise Fund. The SEF offers financial support for newly established innovative enterprises.

Young people in Slovenia often find it difficult to reconcile work and family life, partially because employers perceive parenthood as disruptive to the work process rather than valuable. One of the main objectives of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) is to make it easier for youth to coordinate work and family life.

Slovenia has not adopted any specific cross-border mobility programmes. However, some regulations regarding cross-border mobility were included in the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022. The EU Erasmus+ programme is the most important programme that promotes mobility.

## 3.1 General context

### Labour market situation in the country

The youth unemployment rate in Slovenia has increased considerably over the past 15 years, especially during the economic crisis between 2007 and 2013. In 2008, when the crisis began, the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS) registered 18,223 unemployed persons aged between 15 and 29. In the first year of the crisis, the number of unemployed youth increased by 50.5% to 27,424 persons. From 2008 to 2013, the number of employed young people decreased by 34.9%, from more than 161,000 to 105,000. In 2013, the unemployment rate among youth (15–24 years old) in Slovenia was 21.6%, which was below the EU average of 23.5%. However, the increase in the youth unemployment rate was greater in Slovenia than in the EU as a whole, suggesting that youth unemployment is a relatively more pressing issue in Slovenia.

Youth unemployment had been gradually declining from 2013 to 2016 and again from 2017 to 2019. According to the ESS, in September 2016, the number of registered unemployed persons was 41.8% lower (18,919) than at the end of 2013 (32,523), which delivered the highest number of registered unemployed youth. Similarly, the youth unemployment rate fell by almost 40% in the same period: from 33.8% in December 2013 to 19.7% in August 2016. The registered unemployment rate among young people aged 25–29 years in the same period decreased by 32%, from 19.9% to 13.5%. The percentage of unemployed youth in 2009 was 28%, decreasing to 23% in 2012 and 20% in August 2016. The statistics show an increase in the percentage of unemployed youth in 2017 when there was 26.9% of registered unemployed persons aged between 15 and 29 years. Statistics also indicate that since then young people's employment situation had been again improving until 2019 when there were 22.9% of registered unemployed persons in this age group. In 2020 the unemployment of youth again increased to 27.9%, which is comparable to the percentage of registered unemployed persons in this age group in the year 2017. With currently more than one fourth of young people in Slovenia being registered as unemployed, this group remains one of the most vulnerable groups in the labour market.

Obviously, the changes in youth unemployment are also reflected in youth employment. The number of employed youth has been decreasing over the last decade. According to Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SURSTAT), there were 110,126 economically active youth in 2016, which is 3.9% more than in the previous year. In 2017 there were 115,992 economically active youths, with this number increasing even more in 2018 (122,275) and in 2019 (127,922). From 2015 to 2019 the number of economically active youth increased for 20.7%. Young people in Slovenia usually enter the labour market after concluding their education, and thus the majority of young people actively start seeking a job after the age of 20, especially in the latter half of their 20s. In 2015 there were 51,000

employed youth aged between 15 and 24, with this number increasing to 63,000 in 2018 and then slightly decreasing to 60,000 in 2019. Much higher employment rate is evident in the age group 25-34 years. In 2015 there were 197,000 employed persons from this age group, which is also the highest number in the past five years. The number of employed persons that belong to this age group decreased to 189,000 in 2018 and then slightly increased again to 193,000 in 2019.

The number of young people employed part-time has also gradually risen since 2000. In Slovenia, traditional forms of permanent employment have increasingly been replaced by less secure and more flexible forms of employment. Compared to 2005, in order to increase their employment options, young people were significantly more prepared for geographical mobility and more willing to accept temporary employment in 2010. In 2013, the proportion of temporary employees aged 15–24 in Slovenia (58.5%) and those that were working part-time (42.5%) exceeded that of the same group in the EU as a whole (EU-27), where the percentage of temporary employed in this age group was 45.8% and those working part-time 30.0%. The percentage of temporary employed increased heavily in Slovenia by 2016 when there was 66.3% of such persons (EU-27 average: 47.8%) and then decreased to 56.6% in 2019 (EU-27 average: 46.9%). Part-time employment of this age group in Slovenia has been slightly decreasing since 2013, being 36.7% in 2016 (EU-27 average: 30.9%) and 31.1% in 2019 (EU-27 average for the first time being a bit higher than in Slovenia: 31.6%). Permanent employment is within reach only for a small minority, while the majority likely faces unemployment and career casualisation. Compared to the average of the Slovenian labour force, young people are still more flexible in terms of employment and more willing to accept short-term employment or jobs that did not fit their career goals. Because of this, young people are, on average, unemployed for shorter periods than the rest of the unemployed population.

**Student labour** is the most common form of flexible youth employment. In 2013, on average, students worked 26.3 hours per week, which is more than half the average number of hours per week (41.5) worked by formally employed youth. According to the [Eurostudent VI \(2016-2018\)](#) study a Slovenian student spends 14 hours per week working in paid jobs, which is 2 hours more than an average student from all 28 participating European countries. Together with the other two types of employment (part-time and self-employment), flexible forms of employment comprise the overwhelming majority of officially recognised work done by young people. As follow-ups to 2013 labour market reform, a number of measures were adopted in order to address the tendency to use other forms of work (author contract; the establishment of sole proprietor) when employment is terminated, such as the policy regulating student work that entered into force on 1 February 2015.

According to the study [Slovenian Youth 2013](#), 'another dimension of workforce flexibility results from the level of preparedness and ability to work in different kinds of jobs'. In 2013, only 25% of employed young people worked within their desired field. Even if student workers are excluded, it appears that the majority of employed young people perform jobs that they were not formally educated to do. In 2013, approximately 58% of employed graduates worked within their profession; however, due to a lack of employment opportunities, many graduates were ready to take any job ('anything'), similar to the way in which young people are willing to take various actions in order to reduce the risk of unemployment. According to the study [Slovenian Youth 2018/2019](#), fear of unemployment among young people has almost doubled since 2000. In 2018/2019, 40% of young people believed it would be difficult or very difficult to find employment after finishing education. This percentage increased for almost 5% since 2013, in spite of steady decrease of unemployment among young people since then until 2019. Work possibilities in 2020 are again seriously limited, and even blocked, by the ever-increasing instability of employment which is currently also caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2014 and 2015, 36 instruments were used by the government in order to improve the transition from education to employment and reduce youth unemployment. For the period from 2016 to 2017, instruments developed by different ministries were combined into 15 main



measures, some of which are new and some of which were used previously. In 2018 the government introduced new measures that were focused on promoting entrepreneurship among young people in order to reduce their unemployment. The measures had been continuing throughout 2019.

In Slovenia, many young people enrol in tertiary education and enter the labour market late; most do not start to actively search for employment until the second half of their 20s. In light of the recent developments in the labour market, one can argue that including people up to 29 years of age improved the situation of youth in the labour market since youth unemployment was rapidly increasing.

Slovenia is facing significant demographic changes. The proportion of young people (15–29 years) is decreasing, and the average age is increasing. Approximately half of all young people are in the education system, and about one third are employed. Future demographic changes and the ageing of the Slovene population will have a significant impact on the labour market.

## Main concepts

The most important definitions of youth employment and entrepreneurship were introduced in the Labour Market Regulation Act ([Zakon o urejanju trga dela](#)). The Slovenian government decided to extend the **Youth Guarantee (YG)** to persons up to 29 years of age, although the EU YG still includes only 15–24 year olds, though the proposal of extending age limit to 29 years of age in all EU countries was presented by the EC in July 2020.

The main goal of the active employment policy ([Aktivna politika zaposlovanja](#)) is the “flexicurity” concept, which tries to enhance both flexibility and security in the labour market. The purpose of flexibility as a measure is to help improve the socio-economic situation of young people with enabling faster and easier transition of young people from the education system to the labor market.

## 3.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

There is no single public body responsible for youth employment and entrepreneurship in Slovenia. Different ministries and government offices are involved the implementation of policies and programmes to address this issue, such as the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Equal Opportunities (MDDSZ); the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MGRT); the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MIZŠ) and the ESS. The roles of different ministries can be categorised in the following manner:

- The MDDSZ is the principal body responsible for youth employment.
- The MGRT is the principal body responsible for entrepreneurship.
- The ESS is a key Slovenian labour market institution. It is a public, independent legal entity operating uniformly across the entire country.
- A range of ministries help fund employment programmes.

The following sectors are responsible for implementing the YG from 2014–2015 and 2016–2020:

- The [MDDSZ](#),
- The [MIZŠ](#),
- The [MGRT](#),
- The Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment ([MKGP](#)) and
- The Ministry of Culture ([MK](#)).

The ESS perform activities related to employment, such as development of active employment policy programmes, distribution of career guidance, provision of unemployment insurance and regulation of employment and foreign workers through numerous laws and rules, including the following:

- Employment and Work of Foreigners Act,
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act, school legislation (career guidance, advice and education) and
- Labour regulations (redundant workers, trainee periods, employment contracts, inspections, etc.).

Main public actors are as follows:

- The Committee of the National Assembly of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and the Disabled (Odbor za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in invalide), which discusses draft laws, other acts and issues relating to employment relationships and rights related to employment and vocational training.
- The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth ([Svet Vlade RS za mladino](#)), which was established in 2009 by the Slovenian government to serve as a consultative body. Article 8 of the [Public Interest in Youth Sector Act](#) states, '*[the] Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as a consulting body shall offer assistance in making decisions on matters in the field of youth and the youth sector*' (see also [Chapter 1.5](#)).
- The [Slovene Enterprise Fund](#) (SEF) (Slovenski podjetniški sklad), or the Public Fund of Republic of Slovenia for Entrepreneurship, was established in order to improve access to financial resources for micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to invest, including funding for start-ups and micro-financing.
- [SPIRIT Slovenia - Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalisation, Foreign Investments and Technology](#) (Javna agencija Republike Slovenije za spodbujanje podjetništva, internacionalizacije, tujih investicij in tehnologije), under the auspices of a single agency, implements the orientations of Slovenia's development programmes aiming to advertise innovative, technologically developed, export-oriented destinations to attract foreign investors.
- The [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije) is the main producer and coordinator of national statistics in Slovenia.
- The [Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (Javni štipendijski, razvojni, invalidski in preživninski sklad Republike Slovenije) is the central national management institution for the development of human resources. It also offers scholarships for study and research and increases opportunities for students and researchers to engage in international mobility.
- The [Slovenian Institute for Vocational Education and Training](#) (Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje) is the central Slovenian institution dealing with development, research and counselling regarding vocational and technical education.
- The [Career Centre for Students](#) (Karierni centri) serves as a link between prospective graduates and employers.
- Primary and secondary schools conduct advisory and career guidance work with pupils and students.
- [The Centre for Knowledge Promotion](#) (Center za promocijo znanja) is registered as a research organisation at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia. It specialises in the evaluation, analysis and development of new systems of education.

The following are the main non-governmental actors (NGOs) in the youth sector:

- [MOVIT, Institute for Development of Youth Mobility](#) (Zavod za razvoj mobilnosti mladih) is a national agency that performs tasks in line with the EU programme Erasmus+: Youth in Action.
- The National Youth Council (MSS) ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)) is the umbrella organisation for youth organisations operating at the national level. MSS is also a national representative for young people in the EU.
- [Ustvarjalnik](#) teaches young people how to convert their skills into a source of income by providing opportunities for them to create business projects while in school.
- Institute Nefiks ([Zavod Nefiks](#)) promotes non-formal learning and the recognition of skills gained through non-formal learning activities.
- [Youth Network MaMa](#) (Mladinska mreža MaMa) represents organisations that run youth centres or actively support youths in Slovenia by enabling them to spend their free time in productive ways.
- The Youth Council of Local Communities (Mladinski sveti lokalnih skupnosti) is the umbrella association of youth organisations at the local level, which represents the interests of young people and youth organisations.
- Trade Union Youth Plus ([Sindikata Mladi plus](#)) was established to protect the rights of students, pupils and unemployed youths. Trade Union operates within Free Trade Union of Slovenia which is a member of the [Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia](#) (Zveza svobodnih sindikatov Slovenije).

### Cross-sectorial cooperation

MDDSZ is the principal body responsible for youth employment. MGRT is the principal body responsible for entrepreneurship. The third most important actor in youth employment is MIZŠ. The **ESS** (Zavod RS za zaposlovanje) is a key Slovenian labour market institution that implements numerous projects aimed at improving the situation of youth in the labour market. The ESS actively contributes to the development of employment policy in Slovenia in cooperation with the MDDSZ. Young people mostly register as unemployed at the ESS due to termination of employment or loss of student status in order to become employed faster, obtain unemployment benefits or receive basic health insurance.

Cooperation of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is also foreseen in some other measures of the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)). For example, several ministries (the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport) cooperate to improve the public policies to facilitate the rapid and appropriate entry of young people into the labor market.

The YG programme contributed to better cooperation between the ministries (and cooperation between ministries and other state bodies), although this cooperation could still be improved (for more information on this, see Borut Cink: Youth policy in Slovenia (diploma paper)).

## 3.3 Skills forecasting

### Forecasting system(s)

Slovenia supports vocational education, training and acquiring practical skills that had been neglected in the past. The Government of Slovenia adopted the Scholarship Policy (2015–2019) (Politika štipendiranja (2015–2019)) in June 2015 and the Scholarship Policy (2020–2024) ([Politika štipendiranja \(2020-2024\)](#)) in December 2019. In 2016, it established a **monthly scholarship** of 100 euros for education for in-demand professions (e.g. stonemason, baker, butcher, carpenter, mason, forester, electrician, chimney sweep). This scholarship provided 1.2 million euros to individuals through 1000 scholarships and

ensured that adequate human resources were available to employers. With such scholarships, Slovenia promotes the enrolment of young people in upper secondary vocational and upper secondary technical programmes training them for in-demand occupations. Due to the needs of the labour market, the new Scholarship Policy, adopted in 2019, continues to recognize in-demand professions as defined in the previous Scholarship policy.

In addition to scholarships, MDDSZ is also implementing a programme called 'Regional Scholarship Schemes'. Via this programme, the Ministry is co-financing corporate/company scholarships in order to prevent brain drain from certain regions of the Republic of Slovenia. In addition, the programme encourages employers to place more emphasis on the development and planning of human resources in their companies since they choose the recipients of the scholarships. The target group of this programme includes employers in different regions of Slovenia and young people enrolled in vocational education and training (VET), undergraduate or graduate education.

The project 'We Will be Engineers' (**Inženirke in inženirji bomo!**) attempts to meet the needs of the Slovenian economy, which lacks engineers. The project's creators and participating companies travel to high schools in order to generate interest in pursuing careers in engineering and science. The honorary patron of the project is President Borut Pahor.

In Slovenia, there is no comprehensive skills strategy or governmental platform for skill shortages on a national or regional level. The MDDSZ creates skill matching policies, making use of the work of ESS and several institutes, like the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, that are involved in the collection and analysis of information about labour market demands. The ESS also performs regular surveys of employers' needs. However, there is no coordinated research on skill shortages or surpluses.

### **ICT professionals**

The demand for information and communications technology (ICT) professionals in Slovenia has been increasing. In January 2016, the MIZŠ developed a new strategy for ICT in education: 'Strategic guidelines for continuous implementation of ICT in the Slovenian educational institutions until 2020'. The document involves all levels of education. The strategic guidelines were aligned with 'Digital Slovenia 2020 – Strategy for the development of an information society until 2020' ([DIGITALNA SLOVENIJA 2020 – Strategija razvoja informacijske družbe do leta 2020](#)), which the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted in March 2016.

MIZŠ also supported the CODE Q project, an innovative initiative to promote programming skills (**CODE Q - Učenje programiranja s samodejno generiranimi namigi**). The programme is open to all and can be used for self-learning or as a supplement to regular courses.

In addition, the [CPZ-International, The Centre for Knowledge Promotion](#) developed an initiative aimed at matching individuals' capacities and skills with the needs of the labour market. It also offered training courses, such as those focusing on computer skills.

### **Health professionals**

A decade ago, the state decided to increase enrolment in the Faculty of Medicine in Ljubljana, establish a new Faculty of Medicine in Maribor and adopt the Act on Recognition of Professional Qualifications for Medical Doctors, Specialist Doctors, Doctors of Dental Medicine and Specialist Doctors of Dental Medicine ([Zakon o priznavanju poklicnih kvalifikacij zdravnik, zdravnik specialist, doktor dentalne medicine in doktor dentalne medicine specialist](#)) (in 2011), which led to the import of foreign doctors. While preparing the strategic document 'Resolution on National Health Care Plan 2016–2025' ([Resolucija o nacionalnem planu zdravstvenega varstva 2016–2025](#)), the Ministry of Health prepared a systemic analysis of the need for doctors in Slovenia and developed a training plan for additional health personnel. They predicted changes in the education of medical

specialists, additional funding to educate sufficient number of missing profiles of health professionals and measures to create additional motivation to specialise in high-demand fields.

## Skills development

In 2013, the MIZŠ performed an analysis of the position of higher education graduates in the labour market, taking into account previous analyses of studies' efficacy, labour market situations and employability. Higher education institutions were invited to reduce the number of available places in humanities and social sciences programs by 20% for the 2012/13 academic year. All higher education institutions took this directive into consideration. The Faculty of Social Sciences began to reduce enrolment in programmes by over 20 spots and made changes in the programmes of study in the 2018/2019 academic year. The *University of Maribor lowered the number of available seats in several programs for two consecutive academic years, decreasing the number of seats in economics by more than 50%, in law and civil engineering by around 30% and in logistics by around 18%*. However, in spite of reduction of enrolments into the social science and humanities programmes at public faculties, some new private faculties that exclusively operate within these two domains were created.

As stated in 'Resolution on the National Programme of Higher Education 2011–2020' (**[Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu visokega šolstva 2011–2020](#)**), all programmes of study must ensure the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the national framework of qualifications and key competences: innovation, critical thinking, communication in one's native tongue, cultural awareness and expression, ability to operate in the international arena and information literacy.

The MDDSZ had been trying to raise youths' competitiveness with the project 'Institutional Training of Unemployed Persons' (called 'Informal Education and Training for Young' in 2016). Young unemployed persons could attend courses, lectures and seminars on topics such as languages, computers, forklift operation, storekeeping, housemaid duties, welding and plumbing. In 2016, 2017/2018 and 2019, the government co-financed the projects 'On-the-job training – youth' ([Usposabljanje na delovnem mestu - mladi](#)), 'On-the-job training – youth 2017/2018' ([Usposabljanje na delovnem mestu – mladi 2017/2018](#)) and 'On-the-job training – youth 2019' ([Usposabljanje na delovnem mestu – mladi 2019](#)) which targeted young unemployed persons that were offered on-the-job trainings with the employers across the country. In addition, the Slovenian government tried to raise youths's employability with the project 'Let's employ youth' ([Zaposlimo mlade](#)) in 2019. The subsidies were provided for employers who would employ young people in search for a job that successfully completed trainings within the so-called 'innovative employment projects'.

The programme 'Project Learning for Young Adults' (**[Projektno učenje za mlajše odrasle](#)**) was developed to motivate unemployed young adults who left school before graduating to complete their education and gain new skills and to offer them information and guidance about potential new learning paths. To make the programme more adaptable to the specific needs of vulnerable young people, the programme was recently expanded. In addition to encouraging young people to re-enter formal education, more emphasis is placed on the activities that will help young people who do not wish to continue their formal education more competitive in the labour market.

The Centre for Knowledge Promotion offered training in order to match individuals' capacities and skills with the labour market's needs. The courses offered included sales specialist training, accountancy training, German and English language courses and computer courses.

The strategy 'Slovenia's Development Strategy 2014–2020' ([Strategija razvoja Slovenije 2014–2020](#)) and the National Qualification Framework ([NQF](#)) provide frames for understanding how much importance the government places on skill development to alleviate skill shortages.

## 3.4 Career guidance and counselling

### Career guidance and counselling services

#### Responsible authority

Article 24 of the Labour Market Regulation Act ([Zakon o urejanju trga dela](#)) states that 'lifelong career orientation services shall be provided for preventive purposes to pupils, secondary-school students, university students and their parents supporting the career orientation programme of schools and faculties'. Lifelong career orientation services include activities leading to insights about the labour market.

One of the measures of the YG is lifelong guidance. The aim of the measure is to increase the availability of information about careers, future employment opportunities and career management skills. For these purposes, the following actions are anticipated:

- **Career centres for youth** (Karierni centri za mlade): The organisations responsible for this measure are the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MDDSZ) and the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS). Implementation started in September 2016.
- **Open, responsive, high-quality system of higher education - Further development and implementation of career centres in higher education 2015–2020** (Odprt, odziven in kakovosten sistem visokega šolstva - Nadaljnji razvoj in izvajanje dejavnosti kariernih centrov v visokem šolstvu 2015–2020): The organisation responsible for this measure is the the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MIZŠ). A tender was published in June 2016.

Since the implementation of the YG in 2014, youths are offered more information and counselling within the first four months after registering as unemployed than other unemployed groups. At least two counselling sessions, short group presentations and online communication are offered to each unemployed young person to help them achieve their career goals and find appropriate opportunities.

Progress has been made in terms of professionalizing lifelong career guidance in Slovenia. In 2015, postgraduate training was provided to professionals who offer guidance services, including advisers employed by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS), schools and Human resource management firms (HRM). Quality guidelines have been written and accepted by all stakeholders. The ESS continuously attempts to reach out to young not in employment, education or training (NEETs) through workshops organised by school counsellors. Such cooperation has been established on the national and regional levels.

According to the MDDSZ (2016), one of the objectives of the ongoing project '**Service development of Lifelong career guidance**' is to develop tools for career counselling, especially aimed at young people. Career centres that operate within the ESS allow everyone to use LM information and other career support services. In this way, students are informed and advised regarding why, how and where to obtain ESS services and register as unemployed job seekers when they leave school. The ESS is updating web services, such as its Facebook page, with information about guidance, the labour market and opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

#### Main providers

The ESS provides information on the labour market for unemployed, help with individual career management, basic career counselling, in-depth career counselling and career management skill training. Lifelong career guidance for young people is offered by specially trained counsellors and advisors at career centres. Career counselling is offered by the ESS and school counsellors. The ESS's career counsellors also conduct workshops such as 'Different', 'Job as an Advantage', 'Collective Forms of Counselling – SOS' and 'After Studying in Employment'.

The Commerce Chamber of Slovenia, ESS and National Education Institute are running the project 'Career Day' (Karierni dan) in order to promote most promising future professions to pupils and their parents. Pupils and their parents are invited to visit different organisations and learn about the occupations. The project was piloted at the end of 2014. After good feedback and major organisational improvements to the online platform, it is being adopted as the part of the guidance system for students choosing their future career.

According to the **National report for Slovenia**, one of the priorities on youth employment & entrepreneurship was to develop career guidance and counselling services. 'Within the active employment policy framework, the Employment Service of Slovenia is also engaged in activities targeting education policy. These activities include information and vocational counselling centres, vocational orientation and the programme "Drugače o poklicih" (On professions – in a different way). The Employment Service cooperates with primary schools, offers them lectures on labour market and provides assistance in identifying and counselling to pupils having difficulties in choosing their careers'.

There have also been career centres (**Karierni centri**) at Slovenian universities for the past several years. They were 'established with purpose to facilitate the transition from education to labour market' (see the **National report** for Slovenia). In addition, there is the Career Centre (**Karierno središče**), previously known as the Centre for Informing and Vocational Counselling (Center za informiranje in poklicno svetovanje) at the ESS.

Other providers of counselling include the following:

- The trade union for students, pupils and employed youth, Mladi Plus ([Sindikat Mladi plus](#)), offers career counselling to its members. Career counsellors help individuals set career goals, examine their competencies and the needs of the labour market and improve their job applications and CVs.
- In December 2016, the Nefiks **Institute created the course** 'Training for Youth Career Counsellors' ([Usposabljanje za mladinske karierne svetovalce](#)), which was intended for young people and youth workers who want to provide support to young people regarding career development. The project is co-financed by **the MIZŠ and the European Social Fund**.
- Since 2016, the Nefiks Institute has been organizing 'Nefiks Career Day' ([Nefiksov karierni dan](#)) each year. The purpose of the event is to present career opportunities for young people in connection to the EU to high-school students. The honorary patron of the project is President Borut Pahor and the event is taking place in the Presidential Palace.

#### Target group

The target group of these measures are young people who are still in the education system or are transitioning from the education system to the labour market.

### **Funding**

According to the MDDSZ (2016), (national and European) funds allotted to the YG from 2014–2020 amount to more than 90 million EUR. Most of these funds will be spend on different programmes mentioned in the YG Implementation Plan.

Young people are generally not excluded from measures related to unemployment and can be targeted through counselling and job-seeking assistance. Young people who are registered as unemployed with the ESS can be involved in various programs regarding active labour market policy (ALMP) as a priority target group. The data from the MDDSZ suggests that youths are in fact big beneficiaries of ALMP measures in Slovenia; in 2014, more than 15,000 young people aged 15–29 years were enrolled in ALMP, which increased their employability or led directly to employment. This number amounts to 40% of all those enrolled in ALMP. In 2015, there were around 9,500 of young people enrolled in ALMP, in 2016 around 6,300 and in 2017 around 7,000. In 2018, the number of young people enrolled in ALMP was around 9,800 (which was 31% of all those enrolled in ALMP)

and in 2019 it was around 7,600 (which was 27,5% of all those enrolled in ALMP that year).

### Quality assurance

The results of a survey on satisfaction of young people related to the YG (**Zadovoljstvo mladih z izvajanjem programa Jamstvo za mlade**) showed that young people are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the counselling at the ESS. They desired less bureaucracy, shorter procedures, better information, more counselling on appropriate and available measures and more proactivity among counsellors. Other data from the surveys, which are performed annually by the ESS, show that youths' satisfaction increased after the introduction of the YG. Overall, young people are more satisfied with ESS services than other unemployed groups.

In 2014–15, young people who participated in the YG received 40% more active job mediation services (direct referrals to employers, meetings with employers at 'speed dating' events that were organised in the ESS' regional offices) than unemployed individuals over 30 years of age.

The Guidelines for Active Labour Market Policy Measures 2016–2020 were adopted by the government. The Guidelines, which form the basis for the implementation of ALMP measures/programmes focus on the most vulnerable groups, namely those suffering from long-term unemployment, older workers, low-skilled workers and unemployed youths. These measures stipulate that these groups must be offered training to increase their employability. The Guidelines also include specific indicators and targets for monitoring the effectiveness of ALMP measures. A short-term assessment of the effectiveness of these measures is presented each year in an annual report, 'Measures of the Labour Market'. It includes all relevant information regarding the implementation of all ALMP measures and a short analysis of their effectiveness. The ESS also examines the effect of some measures using a control group. For all measures financed by European Social Fund (ESF), a firm reporting and monitoring structure was established (indicators and targets for evaluation are part of Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the period 2014 – 2020).

## 3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

### Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

Traineeships and apprenticeships are regulated differently depending on the field; sometimes traineeships are mandatory parts of the learning process, and other times educational programs do not include any traineeships. Many areas have their own policies regarding the recognition of internships. There are, for example, rules regarding the traineeship of state prosecutors; health and allied health professionals in healthcare services, who must also undergo professional examinations; employees in the public forestry service, who must also undergo professional examinations and development; education professionals; social workers and sports experts, who also participate in internships and proficiency examinations.

In March 2015, the Committee of the National Assembly of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Disability called on the Government of the Republic of Slovenia to present a comprehensive analysis of regulated traineeship (internships) for graduates of tertiary education, mainly those intending to work in the state administration and public sectors. In April 2015, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia asked ministries (under the leadership of the MDDSZ) to prepare an analysis of traineeship (internships) in ministries and bodies they are responsible for (e.g. state bodies, public funds and local authorities). Following review of the analysis in July 2015, the Slovenian government adopted the Action Plan for the Organisation and Implementation of the Traineeship (Internship) in the Republic of Slovenia. The aim of this action plan was to eliminate regulated traineeships



when possible to make the transition from formal education to the labour market easier for young people.

In the field of state administration, special quotas for trainees were adopted in the 'Joint Staff Plan for State Administration Bodies' (Skupni kadrovski načrt organov državne uprave za leti 2016 in 2017). Under this plan, state authorities could accept only 1–2% of all trainees every year. The recruitment of trainees is simplified (there are no longer special requirements for certain job posts), and work experience is no longer required (or student work experiences are taken into account).

In the past decade, several programmes/projects were implemented by the MDDSZ to support the inclusion of young people into the labour market. One of them was 'Training of Candidates for Graduation at the Workplace and Subsidy for Employment of Graduates/Candidates for Graduation - Activate and Employ Yourself!' (**Usposabljanje absolventov na delovnem mestu in subvencija za zaposlitev diplomantov / absolvent – aktiviraj in zaposli se!**), which was implemented from 2009 to 2012. According to the MDDSZ (2016), the 'program provided reimbursement of expenses for employers who employed a young graduate which was previously, before graduation, involved in training for a job position in the same company. This measure was developed in cooperation with the Student organisation of Slovenia' but approved and implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. Under this programme, 600 young people were enrolled in a job training programme and were subsequently employed. Two of the most recent and ongoing programmes that support inclusion of young people into the labour market through offering trainings are 'Non-formal education and training for young people' ([Neformalno izobraževanje in usposabljanje za mlade](#)) and 'I'm training 2020: On-the-job training – young people' ([Usposabljam.se 2020: Usposabljanje na delovnem mestu – mladi](#)). The first one focuses on acquiring vocational knowledge and skills for better employability of young people, while the second one offers on-the-job training which increases young person's chances of employment within the same or another employer. Both programmes are implemented by the ESS.

## Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

In 2016, a new traineeship programme for young people without work experience was implemented. The programme provided paid traineeships for young people under the age of 30 who completed a degree in law, economics, veterinary science, food technology or livestock production. Total amount of 142,479 EUR was provided for the programme in 2016, 666,254 EUR in 2017 and 445,876 EUR in 2018. The programme allowed young people to achieve regular employment and higher social security, receive training for independent work under the expert guidance of a mentor, undergo proficiency examinations and acquire practical knowledge and work experience, with which young people can improve their employment opportunities. The traineeship typically lasts 10 months. In 2019, 2020 and 2021 the ESS is involved in the EU project 'YFEJ – Your first EURES job' (Tvoja prva zaposlitev EURES), which is 95% financed by the EU. The purpose of the project is to offer help to young people (between 18 and 35 years old) with finding a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in one of the EU countries, Iceland or Norway.

'Initial vocational education and training (IVET)' in Slovenia has very limited provision for apprenticeship training. The vast majority of IVET is school-based, with some work-based elements' (see [The European Trade Union Confederation's paper: European quality framework for apprenticeships \(2016\)](#)). The basis for the regulatory framework for apprenticeship training in Slovenia until 2017 was the Vocational Education Act ([Zakon o poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju](#)) of 2006, although the Act does not provide a specific definition of apprenticeship. According to Article 2, one of its aims is to provide the knowledge, skills and vocational competences required to carry out an occupation and access further education. In 2017, the Apprenticeship Act was adopted ([Zakon o vajeništvu](#)), which regulates apprenticeships as a form of education in secondary vocational education and in programs of further vocational and professional education. The Act defines apprenticeship as a ' form of education, [where] at least 50 percent of the

educational program is carried out as practical training with work at the employer, and at least 40 percent of the educational program is carried out by the school, including all general subjects of the educational programme'.

About 40% of vocational upper secondary education programmes, which last three years, are devoted to practical training. 'Part of this training is done in inter-company education centres, and another part – at least 24 weeks and not more than 53 weeks over a 3-year period – can be carried out in companies' (see [The European Trade Union Confederation's paper: European quality framework for apprenticeships \(2016\)](#)).

Apprenticeship qualifications are classified as Level 4, equivalent to EQF Level 4, in the [Slovenian Qualifications Framework](#).

'There is provision for trade union involvement in the design and implementation of IVET'. 'Trade unions have four (out of 14) representatives on the 'Expert Council for Vocational Education and Training' ([Strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za poklicno in strokovno izobraževanje](#)). Apprentices sign an individual learning contract with an employer. Although this contract is not an employment contracts, apprentices may join a trade union' (see [The European Trade Union Confederation's paper: European quality framework for apprenticeships \(2016\)](#)).

## Recognition of learning outcomes

Recognition of previous (and practical) education is governed by the Rules on the Recognition of the Previous Education in Higher Vocational Education ([Pravilnik o priznavanju predhodno pridobljenega znanja v višjem strokovnem izobraževanju](#)). According to one such rule, for example, the Doba Faculty demand that students prove the knowledge they acquired in formal education with certificates and other documents illustrating the content and scope of the students' work. Students who acquired knowledge through informal education have to prove so with other documents or portfolios (studies, experts' detailed reports, inventions, patents, publications, etc.). Students also have the option to transfer European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) from other higher education institutions.

## Funding

Each ministry regulates traineeships in a specific manner. For example, they can be paid, unpaid or apply a mixed payment system. In the private sector, there are almost no traineeships, but in the public sector they still exist, sometimes as a precondition for a qualifying examination for a position. In the past decade and a half, several programmes / projects were implemented by the MDDSZ. Many of them were supported by the European Social Fund and implemented within the framework of the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development (2007–2013).

The MGRT supports the following action:

**- At the level of vocational schools:** Employers' costs for practical training of human resources in secondary vocational and technical education are co-financed by participating entities, including the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, Slovenian Chamber of Craft and Small Business and Slovenian Chamber of Commerce. Actions to promote vocational education and training are also co-financed to ensure that students acquire professional competencies and employers are able to create human resources to meet the needs of the economy and build and train their staffs. This measure is important for meeting labour demands and reducing human resource deficits.

## Quality assurance

The Slovenian government conducted an 'Analysis of Traineeships in Slovenia' ([Analiza opravljanja pripravništva v Republiki Sloveniji](#)), which served as a basis for the 'Action Plan for the Organisation and Implementation of Internships in Slovenia' ([Akcijski načrt v zvezi z organizacijo in izvedbo opravljanja pripravništev v Sloveniji](#)). MDDSZ prepared the 'Analysis of Traineeships in Slovenia' ([Analiza opravljanja](#)

**pripravištva v RS**). The systemic changes to traineeships proposed in the analysis are as follows:

1. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia is required by its ministries to eliminate provisions in legislation relating to volunteer internships. Organisations overseeing this measure include the **MIZŠ**, the Ministry of Public Administration, the MDDSZ, the Ministry of Health, the *MK* and the **Ministry of Justice**. Its implementation is already underway (legal bases have been amended).
2. Measures related to rules regarding the provision of traineeships and professional examinations in the fields of social security, education, health and librarianship have been developed. Organisations overseeing these measures include the **MIZŠ**, the MDDSZ, the Ministry of Health and the *MK*. Its implementation is already underway (legal bases have been amended).
3. Measures relating to the facilitation of youth employment in the public sector have been developed. Organisations overseeing these measures include the **MIZŠ**, the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of Finance. Its implementation began on 1 January 2016 (government staff plan).
4. A measure regarding internships in the public sector has been developed.

Under each measure, activities regarding the systemic regulation of internships, defined in the action plan as relating to the organisation and the implementation of traineeships in Slovenia, will be carried out. The most salient examples were found in the fields of social work, education, culture and justice. In the field of culture, there were some amendments to legislation; in the field of education there was a tender for internships and some rules were changed; in the field of social work the MDDSZ launched a tender for internships and in the field of justice, nothing has changed. One analysis about internships in Slovenia was performed, but nothing occurred that would begin systematic change.

## 3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market

### Youth employment measures

#### Subsidies aiming to foster youth employment:

Through programs to foster employment, the ESS enables subsidies or partial reimbursement of expenses to be provided to employers for hiring new employees. Each year the government implements measures within the active employment policy, which also target young people. Among other measures trainings of young people in the workplace are subsidized.

A YG measure supports permanent employment of unemployed youths (29 years of age or under), offering employers exemptions from their obligation to pay social contributions for an employed young individual for the first two years after hiring. Through the measure that was in place from 1 November 2013 to 31 December 2015, more than 4,600 unemployed youths found employment. The implementation plan for the ongoing YG ([Jamstvo za mlade: Izvedbeni načrt 2016–2020](#)) was adopted in April 2016 and the measure has been taking place since. More than 97,000 young people had been involved in the YG since the beginning of its implementation by the end of 2018, of which almost 30,000 were employed through subsidies. 256.2 million EUR was spent for the measure in that period.

In the programme 'The First Challenge 2015' (**Prvi izziv 2015**), Eastern Slovenian employers could receive a subsidy totalling 7,250 EUR for employing youths. Employment had to be maintained for at least 15 months, including a 3-month probation period. The programme subsidised 2,893 jobs for youths. Between 2016 and 2019, several other measures that subsidised employments had been taking place. Altogether there were 7,805 of youths (aged 29 years or under) included in subsidised employment measures, which is 34,8% of all persons included in them.

In July 2017 the MDDSZ announced a Public call for co-financing projects promoting entrepreneurship among youth between 2017–2019 (**Javni razpis za sofinanciranje projektov spodbujanja podjetništva med mladimi 2017–2019**) that provided 1 mio EUR for promoting and supporting entrepreneurial activities among unemployed youth (under 29 years of age).

In May 2018 the MDDSZ announced an Open call for co-financing innovative projects for youth employment for 2018 and 2019 (**Javni razpis za sofinanciranje inovativnih projektov za zaposlovanje mladih za leti 2018 in 2019**). The aim of the call was providing financial support for two innovative projects that would help youth unemployed with development of their competences and successful employment seeking.

### Specific target groups:

Young people who are registered as unemployed at the ESS can be involved in various ALMP programs as a priority target group. The data from the MDDSZ suggest that youths are in fact large beneficiaries of ALMP measures in Slovenia. In 2019, 27,5% of all beneficiaries of ALMP measures were young people under the age of 29 and in 2018, this percentage was 31,1%.

### National YG scheme:

In January 2014, the first Implementation Plan for the YG for 2014 and 2015 (Izvedbeni načrt Jamstva za mlade za leti 2014 in 2015) was adopted after the Government of the Republic of Slovenia consulted with key stakeholders. Since 2014, the Slovenian government has implemented many measures regarding the Slovene labour market and its economic situation, focusing on faster transition from the education system to the labour market as well as innovative incentives for employing youths. **The YG target group in Slovenia is broad;** since Slovenia is characterised by a large share of unemployed people aged 25–29 (as a result of high enrolment in tertiary education), already the first YG implementation plan included and/or took into account an expanded target group of young people aged up to 29 (not only up to 25, as it was in the EU until recently).

The Implementation Plan for YG 2016–2020 ([Jamstvo za mlade: Izvedbeni načrt 2016–2020](#)) was adopted in 2016. From 2016 onwards, special focus was placed on youths suffering from long-term unemployment. The Plan involves 15 measures and can be divided into two main areas: so-called precautionary measures, which are intended for youths who are not yet in the labour market, and second measures, which are intended for rapid activation of youth in the labour market. The measures comprising the YG can be divided into two parts:

#### Early action and activation

Three main systemic measures concern early intervention and activation before the entry of young people in the labour market and two measures target young people during their education. The target group of these measures are young individuals who are still in the education system or are transitioning from the education system to the labour market. These are:

1. **Lifelong guidance**
2. **Systemic changes to traineeship**
3. **Reform of the VET system**
4. **Promotion of creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation**

This measure involves a variety of activities targeting young people during their education to enhance their creative and entrepreneurial skills.

- **Promotion of creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation among young people** – The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MGRT and SPIRIT Slovenia (Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalization,

Foreign Investments and Technology). Public tender to elementary and secondary schools in June 2016.

- **Improvement of entrepreneurial skills and promotion of flexible learning pathways between education and the environment in gymnasiums and elementary schools** – The organisation responsible for implementing this measure is the **MIZŠ**. Public tender in September 2016.
- **YOUTH START** – This is an international entrepreneurial project. The organisation responsible for implementing this measure is the **MIZŠ**. It was implemented from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017 at gymnasiums and from 1 November 2015 to 31 August 2017 at schools.

## 5. Scholarships

Activation of young people in the labour market

Four systemic measures are being implemented for quick activation of young people in the labour market. Six measures target unemployed youths 29 years of age and under.

### 6. Strengthening counselling work with youth at the ESS

The aim of this measure is to strengthen work with the unemployed youths. By increasing the number of consultants who will be specifically trained, the quality of counselling will be improved and young people will be empowered to efficiently manage their own careers.

- **Counsellors for rapid activation of youths** – The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The measure is ongoing.
- **Consultants for youths suffering from long-term unemployment** – The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The measure is ongoing.

### 7. Prevention and detection of in the labour market

This measure aims to prevent precarious employment of young people by raising awareness about the problem among young people and employers and by strengthening inspection services.

### 8. International mobility of young people

The measure aims to help young people who want to try their chance on the European labour market.

### 9. Information and communication regarding the YG

### 10. Training and education of unemployed youth

The aim of the measure is to increase the employability of young people with additional training or education and help unemployed youths discover more sustainable and better forms of employment. Education and training programs are provided for in-demand occupations and are designed to meet the actual needs of employers.

- **Non-formal education and training for young people (Neformalno izobraževanje in usposabljanje za mlade)** – This measure is targeted towards young people (up to 30 years old) exclusively with the aim to increase their employment opportunities. The program offers various trainings where participants gain skills and knowledge that are in demand in the labour market. It is based on non-formal learning and targets especially those who have work experience or a profession that is currently not in demand by employers.
- **On-the-job training (Usposabljanje na delovnem mestu)** – This measure is targeted towards young people who have been unemployed for at least three months. Training is offered by employer to provide unemployed youths work experience. About 60–70% of participating employers provide routes to employment within 12 months after concluding the training. The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The measure was first implemented in July 2016.

- **PUM-on: Project Learning for Young Adults (PUM-o; Projektno učenje za mlajše odrasle)** – This programme addresses the unemployment of vulnerable youths with few opportunities to enter the labour market or re-enter higher education. It takes a more in-depth approach to the social integration of youths with difficult family backgrounds. The programme primarily aims to improve their skills and enhance their employability through personal support and project-based learning in groups. Highly qualified professionals provide specialised assistance in the form of a mentorship. The programme is intended to include 500 young people per year and help them to enter employment or re-enter and finish higher education. The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The measure is ongoing.
- **Support for new career prospects (Podpora novim kariernim perspektivam)** – The objective of this measure is to enable the acquisition of competencies, references, knowledge and work experience in the field of culture. The measure is targeted towards unemployed young people (up to 29 years old) into the labor market. The organisation responsible for implementing this measure is the MK. The measure is ongoing.
- **'I Can, Because I know' (Zmorem, ker znam)** – Under this measure young people are offered on-the-job training and employers get reimbursement of eligible training costs. The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The measure is ongoing.

### 11. Incentives for youth employment

The aim is to promote the employment, particularly permanent employment, of unemployed youths, particularly first-time job seekers and youths with no work experience. The measure will increase the number of employment opportunities for unemployed youths and provide compulsory traineeships.

- **Youth Employment Initiative: The first challenge (Prvi izziv)** – This measure was implemented in 2016. It offered a combination of on-the-job training and subventions for employers that hire unemployed youths 29 of age or under that reside in Eastern Slovenia. The programme subsidised 2,893 jobs for youths. The organisations responsible for implementing this measure were the MDDSZ and the ESS.
- **Incentives for permanently employing youths (Spodbude za trajno zaposlovanje mladih)** – The purpose of the program is to encourage employers to permanently employ persons under the age of 30 who are registered as unemployed. Selected employers obtain a subsidy of total amount EUR 5,000.00 for full-time and permanent employment in two equal parts (after employment of a person from the target group and after payment of their 24<sup>th</sup> monthly salary). The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The measure is ongoing.
- **The first job in the field of education (Prva zaposlitev na področju vzgoje in izobraževanja)** – The aim of this measure is to recruit 300 teachers aged 29 or under. The organisation responsible for implementing this measure is the **MIZŠ**. The measure is ongoing. The first public call for educators was published on 26 November 2015 (implementation occurred from 1 February 2016 to 30 November 2016) and the latest public call was published on 12 June 2020 (the implementation is expected to occur between November 2020 and July 2021).
- **Youth for youth (Mladi za mlade)** – The purpose of the measure is employment of young (up to 29 years of age) sports graduates, which supports sustainable integration of young people into the labour market. The organisation responsible for implementing this measure is the **MIZŠ**. The measure began in 2017 and is expected to end in 2021.

### 12. Measures for vulnerable youth

The aims of this measure are to activate youths who have been registered as unemployed at the ESS for more than 12 months and to help young people with disabilities with transition to the labour market.

- **Promotion of the employment of youths suffering from long-term unemployment** – The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The measure was launched in April 2017.
- **The transition of young people with disabilities into the labour market** – The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The Open call for co-financing projects “development and implementation of young people with disabilities into the labour market” ([Javni razpis za sofinanciranje projektov “razvoj in izvajanje prehoda mladih s posebnimi potrebami na trg dela](#)) was published on 1 September 2017. The implementation of the project is planned for the period between 2018 and 2022.

13. **Support to youth entrepreneurship** (see Chapter 3.7)

#### 14. **Young people in rural areas**

This measure aims to help young people establish and develop agricultural careers and encourage the creation of new jobs.

- **Payment scheme for young farmers (Shema plačilo za mlade kmete)** – The beneficiaries of this measure are young farmers (aged between 18 and 40 years) who receive financial support for establishing agricultural activity. The organisation responsible for implementing this measure is the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. The implementation of the measure began in 2014 and is still ongoing.
- **Setting up support for young farmers** – The organisation responsible for implementing this measure is the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. The measure is ongoing.

#### 15. **Projects for youth**

The aim of this measure is to support projects that would provide faster and easier access to employment and/or create new jobs for unemployed youths.

- **Promoting active citizenship among young people to increase employability** - In 2016, the Office for Youth presented a first public tender, of which the aim was to encourage innovative ways of working with youths and new approaches to solving the problem of youth unemployment. From 2016 to 2018, 464 young people were employed: 195 in Eastern Slovenia and 269 in Western Slovenia. The second [public tender](#) was published in October 2019. The expected duration of the project is from February 2020 to September 2021. At least 217 young persons (aged 15 to 29) from Eastern Slovenia and 329 from Western Slovenia will be included in the project. The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the **MIZŠ** and the Office for Youth.
- **Innovative projects for youth employment** – The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. They were implemented in early 2017. In 2019 the ESS published a [public invitation](#) for employers that would receive a subsidy in amount of 5,000 EUR for employing unemployed youth that were trained within the innovative projects for youth employment. The expected number of youth included in this measure is 283. The measure is ongoing and is expected to end in 2021.

#### **Other measures for youth employment**

- In 2010 and 2011, the programme ‘**Absolvent Activate and Employ Yourself**’ (**Absolvent aktiviraj in zaposli se**) was implemented. The programme was proposed by the Slovenian Student Union (ŠOS) and was financed by the MDDSZ. It was intended to prevent young graduates from transitioning into unemployment and involved 321 young people.
- In September 2016, the Ypsilon Institute launched a project, ‘**Made with Y**’ (**Narejeno z ipsilonom**), that was intended to help young people achieve regular employment. The project aimed to solve the problem of youth unemployment by promoting

innovative approaches to working with youth. The goal was to create young professionals that meet employers' needs. The project co-funded by the EU and the MIZŠ.

- The project '**Jobs for Youth**' (**Delo za mlade**), carried out by Youth Network MaMa in cooperation with youth centres throughout Slovenia, was a national networking project involving youth organisations, institutions engaged in work with youths and other players in local communities that aimed to improve the employment prospects of young people. The project focused on the topic of work and the employability of youths and intended to find ways to protect youths from unemployment. The project lasted 9 months (2010–2011).
- From 2015–2016, the Institute Bob ([Zavod Bob](#)), in cooperation with other authorities within the youth sector, carried out the programme '**Display**' (**Prikaz**). It focused on informal learning and was targeted towards youths between 18 and 29. The specific target groups were vulnerable youth, such as those that did not complete their education or only have a low level of education, first-time job seekers, youth suffering from long-term unemployment and social science students. The main objective of Display was to develop a concrete idea for a project in which participants solve their life situations in a long-term way. The project involved four modules and lasted for a total of 320 hours.
- From 2016–2018, the Institute Bob, carried out a project '[Marš na\(d\) trg dela](#)'. The project offered young people (aged between 15 and 29 years) trainings through which they got support in creating, planning and realizing their own career paths.

Regulations intended to foster youth employment are also enacted at the local level. In 2016, the Municipality of Ljubljana proposed a **project, 'Cool Job!'** (Kul služba!), that was designed to help people that are considered harder to employ. The project is one of the key objectives of the MOL Strategy for Youth 2016–2025 (**Strategija Mestne občine Ljubljana za mlade 2016-2025**), a strategy aimed at increasing youth employment. Cool Job! offers opportunities for employment in occupations with a surplus of available jobs (e.g. printer, electrician, librarian).

## Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

The new labour legislation enacted in 2013 introduced the concept of flexicurity. Its main aims were to increase flexibility (mainly by simplifying the procedures for concluding employment relationships), to encourage reduced segmentation in the labour market and to increase the effectiveness of workers' legal protections. According to the MDDSZ (2016), the proportion of newly signed contracts permanent contracts among youth has increased considerably in the first few years after the reform.

Flexibility is becoming more common in the Slovenian labour market; fixed-term jobs (with contracts that typically last three months to one year) are increasing in popularity. In 2016, 52.8% of employees aged 15–29 had fixed-term contracts. In addition, approximately 32,000 people worked through student services, which also offers to be one of the most popular flexible job alternatives for young people in the Slovenian labour market. In 2018, 37% of employed youth aged 15–29 were employed temporarily and additional 7% had occasional jobs. According to the programming document 'Youth Employment' (**Zaposlovanje mladih**), which was produced by the National Youth Council of Slovenia in 2013, the term 'flexicurity' is widely used in Slovenia and abroad. As written in the document, the purpose of flexicurity is to harmonise the needs of employers and employees. Furthermore, this document shows that, in some areas, the Slovenian labour market is too flexible and not secure enough. In Slovenia, more than 75% of offers in the labour market involve fixed-term employment, which does not provide youths with social and financial security. The National Youth Council of Slovenia and other organisations are fighting against this professional instability. They believe that the debate in Slovenia is not about flexicurity, but about how to reduce professional instability among young people and provide them with stable employment.



To avoid deepening this problem, one of the regulations in the Action Plan 2016/2017 of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Izvedbeni načrt 2016/2017 Nacionalnega programa za mladino 2013–2022](#)), the Action Plan 2018/2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt 2018/2019 Nacionalnega programa za mladino 2013–2022](#)) and the Action Plan 2020/2021 ([Izvedbeni načrt 2020/2021 Nacionalnega programa za mladino 2013–2022](#)) is to provide stimulus for permanent youth employment (Spodbude za trajno zaposlovanje mladih). Under this regulation, employers who employ youths will receive subsidies, thus encouraging stable employment and social security among youths. In line with these calls, MDDSZ published 'For a Decent Work' (Za dostojno delo) in 2016; i.e. a document stressing the constant pressure, tight deadlines and unpredictable conditions young people face.

Since July 2013, employers in Slovenia are entitled to partial reimbursement for their contributions to pension and disability insurance for two years if they employ a person younger than 26 years of age with a permanent contract for at least two years. The aim of this measure is to stimulate employment with permanent contracts.

### Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

Young people in Slovenia often find it difficult to reconcile work and family life, partially because employers perceive parenthood as disruptive to the work process rather than valuable. One of the main objectives of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) is to make it easier for youths to coordinate work and family life. To realise this aim, one subfield was prioritised: reinforcement of activities to eliminate discrimination of parents and enable individuals to coordinate their private and family lives easier. The supervisors of this measure are the MDDSZ, the MIZŠ, the Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia and other social partners.

One certificate award project, which was co-funded by the European Social Fund, is an example of good practice recognising parenthood as a value. This project, '[Family-Friendly Enterprise Certificate](#)' (Certifikat družini prijazno podjetje) is organised by the Ekvilib Institute in cooperation with the MDDSZ and the Trade Union Mladi Plus.

Currently the largest number of young people ever are being integrated into the labour market by active employment policy. The Employment Relationship Act ([Zakon o delovnih razmerjih](#)) includes some provisions regarding mothers and their rights (night work, etc.), but in practice still falls short of allowing young parents to more successfully reconcile work and family life. Some other measures have also been adopted, such as subventions for housing for young families and benefits for student parents/families.

**Youth 2010**, the last in-depth survey of young people between 25 and 30 years of age, confirms that women are especially affected by the youth unemployment situation. The unemployment rate of female graduates increased over the last decade from 4.3% to 17.8% (for male graduates, the rate increased from 2.8% to 7.5%). In 2010, the general unemployment rate among young women was 12% higher than among men. According to the study [Slovenian Youth 2013](#), this percentage remained approximately the same in 2013.

### Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

To fight against youth unemployment, the Slovenian government developed an active employment policy. Youths under 30 years of age who were insured for six months in the two years prior to their unemployment can receive **unemployment benefits**. According to the Youth Index 2016 ([Indeks mladih 2016](#)), 3,102 young people received compensation for unemployment.

Table 1: The Implementation Plan of YG 2016–2020: total funds equal 300 million EUR

**Estimated funds for the Implementation Plan of YG 2016–2020:**

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
70.1 million EUR	62.7 million EUR	58.0 million EUR	54.6 million EUR	53.9 million EUR

Since the start of the YG in 2014, 97,000 young people had been involved in the measures by the end of 2018. In the same period, 256,2 million EUR was spent for YG measures.

For the period from 2016–2018, Slovenia received 5 million EUR from the European Social Fund to support innovative ways of working with youths and increasing the employability of young people.

**Quality assurance**

The 2015 Annual Report on the implementation of state actions regarding the labour market shows that, in terms of the transition to employment, one of the most successful training programs was 'On-the-Job Training' (Usposabljanje na delovnem mestu). On the other hand, there were delays in the implementation of the programmes 'The First Challenge 2015' (**Prvi izziv 2015**) and 'Promoting Apprenticeships' (**Spodbujanje pripravništva**). There were altogether 2,951 young people involved in the programme 'The First Challenge 2015', which was implemented in the years 2016 and 2017. At the end of 2015, the National *Youth Council of Slovenia* and the ESS presented the results of an analysis of the survey 'Satisfaction of Youth with the Programme YG' (**Zadovoljstvo mladih s programom Jamstvo za mlade**). The analysis aimed to identify the satisfaction of youths who were involved in YG measures. In total, 5,823 youths participated in the YG until September 2015. Youths' satisfaction with YG measures was taken into account when designing further actions. The abovementioned results of the survey on youths' satisfaction with the implementation of the YG *showed the necessity of* increasing promotion of the measures, improving control over employers and developing more measures that produce jobs.

The MDDSZ prepared a report on the implementation of the YG 2014–2015 (Poročilo o izvajanju jamstva za mlade 2014-15). In 2014 and 2015, 49,181 young job seekers found employment. In 2015, 41.5 % of all ALMP participants were younger than 29. In total, 29.3 million EUR was spent on ALMP measures for youths in 2014, and 20.7 million EUR was spent in 2015. According to the ESS, there was a 40% increase in the number of unemployed persons who found jobs within four months of registering as unemployed in 2014 and 2015. However, in the same governmental document, youth organisations that are actively involved in monitoring the implementation of the YG stated that there is still room for improvement in the measures and implementation of the YG.

Slovenia introduced a special intervention measure to promote employment for unemployed youths under 30 years of age. Under this measure, employers are exempted from making contributions to social security for two years after offering a permanent position to an unemployed person under 30 years of age. In the 24 months after the implementation of this measure (1 November 2013 to 31 December 2015), according to the MDDSZ, more than 4,200 young people were employed.

The data in the The Annual Report on the implementation of state actions regarding the labour market in 2016 shows that the YG plan was ungraded (in comparison to the previous year), especially in terms of counselling processes and work approaches (especially) regarding the long-term unemployed youth. More than 15,000 young persons were included in the measures, 9,523 out of them were employed. In the report from 2017, it is written that altogether 22,270 young persons were involved in the YG measures,

among which 7,810 were employed through subsidized employment. The report from the year 2018 shows that there was 18,786 young persons involved in the YG measures that year, among which 3,900 were employed.

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

#### Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

One of the measures of the YG is '**International Mobility of Young People**'. It aims to help young people who want to try to find a job in the European labour market. It involves the following measures:

- [EURES - Your first EURES Job \(Tvoja prva zaposlitev EURES\)](#) – The purpose of the project is to offer help to young people (between 18 and 35 year olds) with finding a job, traineeship or apprenticeship in one of the EU countries, Iceland or Norway. The organisations responsible for this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The measure began in 2019 and is ongoing.
- **Transnational mobility for young people with fewer opportunities (learning network for transnational mobility measures for disadvantaged youths and young adults - TLN mobility)** – The organisations responsible for this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The implementation began in 2016.
- **Open, responsive and high-quality higher education system** – This measure aims to increase the mobility of students from less privileged backgrounds. The organisations responsible for this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The measure began in 2016 and is ongoing.

Slovenia has not developed any cross-border mobility programmes in the field of employment. The EU Erasmus+ programme is the most important programme promoting mobility because it represents the beginning of a legal way to support such projects and their goals. As a result, an increasing number of players in the youth field have prepared international youth activities.

According to the '[Slovenian National report](#)', 'Slovenia promotes opportunities for education and work abroad through the Slovene Human Resources and Scholarship Fund, and the EURES job centres that operate within the Employment Service of Slovenia'. 'The abovementioned **fund** was established in 2006 with a view to implementing the scholarship policy, allocating funds for human resources and staff development and increasing employability, promoting life-long learning and linking the education system with labour market needs'.

YfEJ ([Tvoja prva zaposlitev EURES](#)) is a targeted mobility scheme to help young nationals aged 18–35 find work in EU EFTA/EEA countries that they were not born in. It targets both job seekers and employers and provides a comprehensive mobility package that includes financial support. Presently, the scheme is expected to ensure around 1,500 work placements. The project supports mainly jobs, but also some traineeships or apprenticeships. The project is expected to end in November 2021. Specialized counsellors in EURES centres provide information, counselling and job-brokerage services for the European labour market. According to the Portal EURES, most social science graduates want to work abroad. Due to their language abilities, they usually seek job in Austria, Italy, Germany and the UK.

Additional scholarships for studying abroad are available within the international mobility programmes of the Ad Futura Foundation. Since 2009, students have had access to loans for studying at home or abroad (see the [Slovenian National report](#)).

The purpose of the project 'Euroguidance Centre Slovenia' is to provide Slovenian citizens with information about opportunities for training and education in other European

countries. The European Commission sees the project as a way to facilitate the flow of pupils, students, teachers and young workers between European countries.

In addition to initiatives and programmes mentioned above, the Trade Union **Sindikat Mladi Plus** offers counselling for traineeships and employment abroad.

### Support to youth entrepreneurship

This measure aims to help young people who want to pursue an independent entrepreneurial path by providing a supportive environment as well as training, mentoring, counselling, tips for starting a business, and so on.

- **Promotion of entrepreneurship among young people** – The public tender for co-financing projects to promote entrepreneurship among young people 2017–2019 ([Javni razpis za sofinanciranje projektov spodbujanja podjetništva med mladimi 2017–2019](#)) was published in July 2017. The aim of the tender was to promote entrepreneurial activities among young (up to 28 years) unemployed persons. The organisations responsible for implementing this measure were the MDDSZ and the ESS. **Promotion of entrepreneurship among young people with facilitation of access to entrepreneurial careers**– The organisation responsible for implementing this measure is the MGRT. The measure aims at reducing barriers for young individuals to become entrepreneurs.
- **Basic counselling and assessment of business ideas** – The organisation responsible for implementing this measure is the MGRT.
- **Incentives for young companies** – The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MGRT and the SEF. The measure is ongoing.
- **Promotion of business cooperation and youth employment in youth cooperatives** – The public tender for co-financing actions for the start-up of social enterprises and youth cooperatives in 2016–2018 ([Javni razpis za izbor operacij za zagon socialnih podjetij in mladinskih zadrug v letih 2016–2018](#)) was published in July 2016. The organisation responsible for implementing this measure was the MGRT.
- **National support network for young people in the field of social entrepreneurship** – The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS.
- **Promoting entrepreneurship among women** – The organisations responsible for implementing this measure are the MDDSZ and the ESS. The measure is ongoing.

### Legal framework

Slovenia has not adopted any specific cross-border mobility programmes. However, some regulations regarding cross-border mobility were included in the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022. The aim of this programme was to increase international mobility among youths, particularly students. The subfields that were prioritised are the reinforcement of instruments that support the return of youth to Slovenia and the improvement of cooperation between youth who live and work abroad and domestic enterprises and educational institutions.

## 3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

### Policy Framework

One of the six key areas of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 (**Nacionalni program za mladino**) emphasises the importance of understanding entrepreneurship education and their relationship to social responsibility and the development of social enterprises. In terms of specific objectives, the importance of encouraging entrepreneurship education through school curricula is mentioned, but no actions are attached. In the key area 'Employment and Entrepreneurship' of the National Programme

for Youth, it is considered a priority to 'promote innovation, creativity, initiative, entrepreneurship (including social entrepreneurship) and self-employment among young people and underline the increasing importance of developing socially responsible entrepreneurial attitudes and knowledge.

There are three indicators relating specifically to entrepreneurship education:

1. Proportion of new and emerging entrepreneurs by age group;
2. Proportion of young entrepreneurs who have at least one employee in their company;
3. Proportion of young people who are receiving education in the field of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship by gender

To implement these measures, different instruments/regulations were introduced in Action Plans. For instance, in the Action Plan 2016/2017, the following instruments/regulations were introduced:

- Service 'All in one place' (Storitve vstopnih točk 'Vse na enem mestu' (VEM)), which involves free support services for youths who decide to pursue an entrepreneurial career;
- University and social-entrepreneurial incubators that will conduct activities intended for youths who want to enter the world of entrepreneurship;
- National youth network for support in the field of social entrepreneurship;
- Innovative projects for youth employment and
- Activities to promote entrepreneurship among youths.

In the [Action Plan 2018/2019](#), the following measures/instruments were introduced:

- Incentives for employment of youth, which also promote entrepreneurship among young people and equip them with entrepreneurial competences.
- University incubators (Univerzitetni inkubatorji), which target young people who want to become entrepreneurs and provide them assistance with the implementation of innovative business ideas.
- SPOT point services (Storitve točk SPOT), which provide free support services for young people that are planning to become or have already become entrepreneurs.
- Creativity, entrepreneurship, innovation for youth (UPI – Ustvarjalnost, podjetništvo, inovativnost za mlade), which promote innovation and entrepreneurship among young people.
- Incentives for young enterprises.
- Start-ups of social enterprises and youth cooperatives.
- Mentoring schemes for social enterprises.

In the Action Plans for Active Policy Implementation, the measure 'promoting self-employment among youth' was introduced (Spodbujanje podjetništva med mladimi) which was implemented between 2017 and 2019. This measure was intended to help unemployed individuals who would like to become self-employed. Projects promoting entrepreneurship among youths were funded by the ESS. The purpose of the project was to encourage activities for unemployed youths, promote innovation and creativity and support new ideas. Slovenia already has a broad strategy regarding entrepreneurship education and is currently developing a specific strategy. In the Action Plan 2020 ([Načrt za izvajanje ukrepov aktivne politike zaposlovanja za leto 2020](#)) it is stated that the measure is not planned for implementation in 2020.

Within the framework of the international project E3 – **Entrepreneurship Education for Youth Employment** (Izobraževanje o podjetništvu za zaposlovanje mladih), a tender was launched for young people to develop social enterprises that can successfully and

sustainably address social problems. E3 wants to contribute to fighting youth unemployment through providing youths with practical tools on Social Youth Entrepreneurship. Project's aim is to train NEET's on Social Youth Entrepreneurship, in which they might find interesting work opportunities, especially in social enterprise, a newly appeared labour market sector lacking HR which can employ society's fragile members.

The following measures were adopted to support entrepreneurship (see the OECD working paper '[Entrepreneurship support for the unemployed in Slovenia](#)')

- **YES Start:** The Young Executive Society (YES) organises the two-year programme YES Start for all unemployed people who have a desire to learn about entrepreneurship. The project provides them with an opportunity to develop business ideas and an entrepreneurial spirit. The programme is co-funded by the MGRT.
- **Entrepreneurially into the World of Business (Podjetno v svet podjetništva):** This project is designed to help highly educated unemployed individuals under 35 years of age start a business or become employed. It provides an allowance, entrepreneurship training and individual support through regional development agencies. Participants are hired as employees and receive a monthly salary of 798 EUR while they attend full-time training. Training and coaching are provided by staff in the regional development agencies and business consultants. Participants had access to a business advisory service for one year after starting a business. The project started as a regional pilot project but has been available nationally since 2013.
- **ARTUS:** This programme aims to help unemployed youth develop and implement creative and innovative projects. The pilot project was organised by the ESS, the Career Centre Maribor, the Centre for Civic Education in Maribor and Terra Parzival between 7 April 2014 and 20 May 2014. During the pilot, 12 unemployed youths attended workshops on developing business ideas to prepare for self-employment.
- **KonektOn:** The KonektOn entrepreneurship centre conducted a series of eight workshops in order to prepare unemployed youths for starting businesses. The workshops took place in May and June 2014 at the Centre for Vocational Guidance in Koper under the auspices of the ESS. In total, 17 unemployed youths with university degrees developed their business ideas, exchanged views and experiences and received advice. The workshops covered self-motivation, preparing business models, the value of collaboration, defining markets, communication and creative thinking. They were partly funded by the ESF under the Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007–2013.
- **EnterYOUTH:** The Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj is working with four other institutions, including the lead partner in Croatia, to promote entrepreneurship among youths and facilitate the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills to help youths identify and pursue business opportunities. The project included a total of 200 young people. It was implemented between February 2014 and January 2015 with a total budget of 221,179 EUR. The project was funded within the framework of the Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance by the EU and the MGRT.

## Formal learning

Entrepreneurship education is part of the Slovenian Operational Programmes 'Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy' from 2014–2020. 'Under the Priority Axis 10 – "Knowledge, skills and lifelong learning to enhance employability", there is a Specific Objective 3 – "Promote flexible learning pathways and support high-quality career orientation for school-age youth at all levels of the education system", directly linked to entrepreneurship education'.

The Basic School Act of 2007 introduced the objective 'development of entrepreneurial attitudes in terms of effectiveness, innovation and creativity' into curricula at both primary

and lower secondary schools. The teaching guidelines for entrepreneurship were also integrated into curricula.

'Entrepreneurship education is explicitly recognised as a cross-curricular objective for all subjects in ISCED 1-3 including school-based IVET, and is also part of other compulsory and optional subjects at different levels. In ISCED 1-2, the Basic School Act includes an Entrepreneurship education related objective and teachers in basic schools pursue this objective during lessons. The implementation of the updated subject curricula for basic schools started in school year 2011/12, including a competence approach (one of these competences is the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship)'.

A comprehensive approach to including entrepreneurship in school education will be developed in the curricula. Currently, entrepreneurship education is provided only in upper secondary schools in Slovenia.

The subject of **entrepreneurship** was included in curricula at the secondary education level to increase entrepreneurship among youth. It is compulsory for students in the Secondary School of Economics, and the course takes 315 hours to complete. It is a professional course that provides fundamental business skills, discusses the role of enterprises in modern society and helps develop students' entrepreneurial competences, knowledge and skills in order to allow them to start their own business. It also motivates students to study business.

A course about **entrepreneurial informatics** is also offered in secondary schools. It is an optional subject, and its main purpose is to offer a wide range of knowledge and skills concerning different aspects business and information technology (IT), such as strategic planning, IT support, management, decision making and marketing. The fundamental competences that are obtained in this course are self-initiative and enterprising. The course takes a minimum of 35 hours and a maximum of 105 hours.

## Non-formal and informal learning

The 'Youth Entrepreneurship Sandbox' (**Ustvarjalnik**) allows young people to develop their first entrepreneurial ideas. The team helps them by providing mentorship and organising corporate events and clubs in Slovenia. Usually, business clubs are created in high schools and are run by young entrepreneurs.

The project '**Y.business**', organised by the Ypsilon Institute (Zavod Ypsilon), enables young people between 20 and 30 years of age to gain competencies that they need in the modern business world and did not obtain during their formal education.

The project 'Y.startup', organised by the Ypsilon Institute (Zavod Ypsilon), offers support to young people with developing their own entrepreneurial idea.

Some individual entrepreneurial clubs operate within primary and secondary schools and provide courses and seminars. Young people usually want to strengthen their entrepreneurial competencies (e.g. business etiquette, communications) when they want to start their own businesses.

'In partnership with the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, the Youth Guild Association has set up a system tool (Nefix) intended for Slovenian young people aged 14 and older and used for recording learning. The main aim of the project is to ensure a uniform system of recording non-formal education. In parallel and in cooperation with Nefix, the Youth in Action national agency promoted Youthpass' (see the **Slovenian National report**).

'The web portal (**www.talentiran.si**) hosts the electronic version of the book in which users collect a record of their non-formal education in six different areas: active citizenship, work, summer work, student's jobs for at least 60 days), organised forms of education, cams and voluntary work, time spent in foreign countries, other ways of acquiring knowledge skills and experiences. The main aim of the Web portal is to link up young people and stakeholders such as employers, policy makers and experts who can

help to raise the employment chances of young people. The portal is promoted among employers (in profit and non-profit sectors) and NGOs' (ibid.).

**Model M 2014:** This training programme was developed to help unemployed youths (up to 30 years old) with a university degree start a business or define a career path. The programme included an induction process and three training modules that covered business creation and different career options. The full-day workshops occurred twice per week for three months. The training was implemented by the Institute for the Development of Social Responsibility and the Career Centre of the University of Maribor and is co-financed by the Municipality of Maribor and the Maribor and Ptuj regional offices of the ESS. In total, 38 participants from the Municipalities of Maribor and Ptuj and their surrounding areas successfully completed the programme.

Other measures related to entrepreneurship education include the following:

- **'Brave. Creative. Enterprising.'** (**Pogumni. Kreativni. Podjetni.**), a project supervised by the Institute for a Creative Society (Institute TiPovej!) that started in 2015 and is ongoing. It help young people acquire social and entrepreneurial skills while in secondary school. They also strengthen their capacity for self-realisation and develop creative thinking skills. The programme is supported by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth and Office for Youth of the City of Ljubljana.
- **'YES Slovenia'** (**JA Slovenija**), which was supervised by the Institute for the Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship (Zavod za spodbujanje podjetnosti mladih), involves several programmes through which students develop a sense of entrepreneurship. Particularly, primary school pupils learn from the experience and become acquainted with the fundamentals of entrepreneurship.
- **'Promoting entrepreneurship and flexibility'** (**Spodbujanje podjetništva in prilagodljivosti**), which was supervised by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Training, was launched in March 2013 and lasted until October 2014. It promoted vocational education and training as ways for young people to learn about vocations as well as further education and employment opportunities.
- **'Opening Doors On My Own'** (**Vrata odpiram sam**) was led by the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training. The programme promotes entrepreneurship in education, targeting young people. The project arose from the need for new employment opportunities, and it encouraged youths to search for innovative ways to prevent unemployment. There is a perceived lack of entrepreneurial skills, entrepreneurship and personal initiative among young people. The programme was evaluated in 2015. Teachers believed that, among all the entrepreneurial skills covered in the programme, students improved most in terms of teamwork and knowledge of business processes
- **'Young and Entrepreneurial'** (**Mladi in podjetni**) was adopted by the MIZŠ in 2011 and was targeted towards those who left school early. The main aim of the programme was to renew and acquire new knowledge and abilities to identify individuals' potentials and opportunities in the workplace. This was intended to increase the number of opportunities for youths in the labour market and encourage them to engage in the learning process. The programme was attended by three main target groups: those who left school early; youths who entered the labour market directly after the education and took low-qualified and unstable jobs and those with low educational qualifications (even if they completed primary education). The duration of the programme was 100 hours over 3 months.

## Educators support in entrepreneurship education

The virtual classroom on self-initiative and entrepreneurship, run by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, provides some materials and guidelines which were developed within the scope of different projects and can help teachers of entrepreneurship education at upper secondary level (general and school-



based IVET). Slovenia is still involved in projects aimed at developing teaching methods and materials’.

The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training implemented the 'Opening Doors' project (Vrata odpiram sam), co-funded by the European Structural Funds and the state budget. This project involved the development of teaching materials.

## 3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs

### Access to information

To foster entrepreneurship among youths, the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 (**Nacionalni program za mladino**) was created in order to help youths begin their careers. The Resolution exposes the need to provide youths access to information services and high-quality information.

Young entrepreneurs receive a lot of information and financial incentives from the Slovene Enterprise Fund (SEF) through a special program, 'Youth' (**Mladi**), which was started in 2014. Young entrepreneurs can get support from various technological parks, such as Ljubljana Technology Park. The SEF is another large source of information on youth entrepreneurship in Slovenia.

#### Female entrepreneurs

According to the Public Employment Service (PES), women are much more cautious when deciding whether to begin an entrepreneurial journey. In May 2016, Slovenia launched a special ALMP programme to encourage and support the self-employment of women with higher levels of education. 'Supporting Women Entrepreneurs' is a joint ALPM programme supervised by MDDSZ and MGRT and implemented by the Public ESS and the Public Agency Spirit Slovenia. The programme offers training for unemployed women who want to start a business, followed by start-up support (lump-sum subvention for self-employment) and follow-up training and mentorship. The target group is unemployed women with higher professional education (level six or higher). The target group was selected based on the labour market, in which employment opportunities have diminished for women with tertiary education, especially during the economic crisis (which led to few new employment opportunities in the public sector). In 2017, 405 women became self-employed with the support of the programme, 77 of which were younger than 30 years of age. In 2018, the programme supported self-employment of 393 women, among which were 45 younger than 30 years and in 2019, the programme supported 138 women, 9 of which were younger than 29.

### Access to capital

The SEF (Javni Sklad Republike Slovenije za podjetništvo) offers financial support for newly established innovative enterprises. These incentives provide financial support to young enterprises in the first phase of development. 'This is the most extensive group of newly established innovative enterprises that show potential for rapid growth and require favourable financial sources when starting out.'

The MGRT supports the following actions, which represent the connection between the school system and the economy, as well as activities performed during the beginning phase of an enterprise:

**- At the level of faculties: Services of** university incubators. A university incubator is a legal entity that is under a contract or agreement regarding long-term cooperation with the university. It enables the realisation of entrepreneurial initiatives. Alone or in conjunction with the university, pre-incubation activities and entrepreneurial initiatives are carried out in order to allow innovative incubated companies to operate in a regulated business environment and obtain the necessary support for their development.

These measures are implemented in primary and secondary schools and faculties, but involve a very small percentage of young people. The matter is not systemically regulated and is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

Through SPIRIT, the MGRT carries out various activities that promote entrepreneurship:

- General promotion of entrepreneurship as a social category and
- Measures to support entrepreneurship among other target groups (for example, women).

#### Activities of the SEF

The SEF has created the programme 'Young Enterprises', which provides support to enterprises that have been operating for less than 5 years that, due to their development and lack of a track record, have difficulty obtaining the necessary financial resources in the market.

Within this programme, the SEF offers special incentives to young enterprises that are at the beginning phase of development, have economic importance and are identified by a gap analysis as extremely vulnerable on the market.

The SEF offers the following:

- Seed capital – 'Products designed for young enterprises with the potential for growth, and consequently for creating new jobs (especially young technological enterprises), and that are especially vulnerable in the early stages of development are provided to ensure that the business gets off to a successful start.'
- Microcredits for young enterprises – This provides enterprises within specific target groups access to favourable financing resources.
- Guarantees for young enterprises – 'The SEF provides guarantees for bank loans with interest rate subsidies, which enables SMEs to obtain bank loans to implement projects in a faster, easier and cheaper manner.'

'Young Enterprises' contributes to the development of enterprises, the successful transfer of business development ideas into successful commercial undertakings and the creation of innovation-oriented enterprises with the potential for growth. It focuses on the development and commercialisation of products, processes and services. Products are created based on the principle of '**SEF TWIN**', which means that the recipients of funds are entitled to financial incentives as well as substantive incentives (e.g. a **coaching programme**) that are intended to meet the needs of enterprises.

Recently, leading innovators have started to connect through the initiative Start:up Slovenia in order to create and strengthen national programmes for encouraging entrepreneurship and ensure that there is a comprehensive support network for launching and building start-up companies throughout Slovenia. Start:up Slovenia is an open platform that various organisations and individuals can join by providing a statement of support indicating that they wish to contribute to making Slovenia a dynamic, entrepreneurial and talent-friendly country. Programmes implemented by the initiative provide financial support (grants, guarantees, microloans, seed capital and venture capital) to encourage ideas, projects and start-ups. There are organised start-up weekends, and a national campaign that concludes with an international start-up and entrepreneurship event, [PODIM](#).

## 3.10 Promotion of entrepreneurship culture

### Special events and activities

The most important business fair in Slovenia is **the International Trade and Business Fair** (MOS – mednarodni sejem obrti in podjetnosti) in Celje. At this fair, the coordinators open a tender for youth entrepreneurs, titled **MOS's Enterprising Talents** (MOSovi

podjetni talenti). This allows young entrepreneurs to obtain their first business contacts and begin successful businesses abroad.

In addition, the **Fair Informativa** (Sejem Informativa) is held each year. The purpose of the fair is to inform youth about educational possibilities and offer information about jobs and related topics. Exhibitors include educational institutions, employers, non-governmental organisations, organisations operating in the youth sector, coordinators of governmental programs and banks.

There are also individual events coordinated by NGO's (e.g. the Young Entrepreneur Institute – **Zavod Mladi podjetnik**).

To foster social entrepreneurship and increase its recognisability among youths, one strategic development aim was adopted by the Slovenian government: the Strategy of Social Entrepreneurship 2013–2016 (Strategija socialnega podjetništva 2013-2016). Its aim was to increase individuals' basic knowledge of social entrepreneurship. To achieve this goal, two measures were carried out, but only one involves youths. That measure includes at least 30 informational workshops a year at the entrance points 'All in one place' (Vstopne točke VEM). In addition, in line with the Action Plan 2014–2015 of the Strategy of Social Entrepreneurship (Izvedbeni načrt Strategije socialnega podjetništva), promotion of social entrepreneurship fairs, educational conferences on the meaning of social entrepreneurship, counselling and social entrepreneurship concerning farms was performed.

The European Fund for Regional Development provides financial support for social incubators (50,000 EUR per year (150,000 EUR), with the possibility to increase to 200,000 EUR for 3 years). Promotion of social entrepreneurship development is performed by public tenders that are co-funded by the European Social Fund (Evropski socialni sklad).

The MGRT supports the following actions:

- **Through an agency, SPIRIT:** Measures to promote creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation are implemented through SPIRIT. The purpose of those measures is to promote the development of personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship:

- Creativity, initiative, acceptance of risk and responsibility and self-esteem;
- Basic skills and contacts within the business world, which improve individuals' understanding of the role of creativity, enterprises and entrepreneurship in society;
- Awareness of entrepreneurship as a social category, which allows individuals to decide to implement their own ideas and realise their own undertakings;
- Achieve the impact on society as a whole, which requires the involvement of young people, parents, teaching staff, companies and local communities and includes a number of regions.

Acceleration Business City, BTC CITY and Ypsilon Institute established '**Acceleration Business City**', a group of young companies and start-ups that are eager to spread and create a healthy ecosystem in Slovenia. The group offers young company what they need for a successful start.

## Networks and partnerships

The project 'My Market' (Moja Štacuna) is co-run by several partners: the **Association Pelikan Karitas** (Zavod Pelikan Karitas); the Idrija-Cerkno Development Agency (**Idrijsko-Cerkljanska razvojna agencija**) and the Institute for Revitalisation of Rural Areas (Potencial Inštitut. Inštitut za revitalizacijo podeželja).

## 3.11 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

- The MDDSZ prepared grounds for a new apprenticeship model in Slovenia that included, inter alia, reform of vocational education so the emphasis was placed on developing models for practical training and preparing a law to regulate apprenticeships. Activities were carried out in close cooperation with relevant social partners. The plan involved 1) reforming the system of vocational education; 2) gradually introducing an apprenticeship system and 3) promoting practical training among employers from 2016–2022. The result of these preparations and cooperations is The Apprenticeship Act ([Zakon o vajeništvu](#)) that was adopted in 2017.
- The Slovenian government addressed this issues (precariousness employment of young people, safe and healthy working environment) in the document 'For Decent Work' (Za dostojno delo), which includes a number of measures that could help prevent misuse of atypical (and often unstable) forms of work. In 2017, the MDDSZ started co-financing a project 'Regional Center for Decent Work Ljubljana' ([Regijski center za dostojno delo Ljubljana](#)), which provides information, advice and networking for all key actors in the labor market; promotes the concept of decent work; and conduct analyzes and research on labor market characteristics and trends.
- On 18 November 2016, the MDDSZ sent amendments to the Employment Relationship Act ([Zakon o delovnih razmerjih](#)), Labour Market Regulation Act ([Zakon o urejanju trga dela](#)) and Labour Inspection Act ([Zakon o inšpekciji dela](#)) in a public debate. These changes were made based on an analysis of the labour market and proposals made by social partners and professional and executive institutions. The Amendments of the Employment Relationship Act ([Zakon o dopolnitvi zakona o delovnih razmerjih](#)) that positively affect employees who are parents of small children, came into force on 18 December 2019. The Amendment included an option for employees to get paid absence from work in order to escort a child, a first-grader, to school on their first day of school. On 29 November 2019 The Amendments of the Labour Market Regulation Act ([Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah Zakona o urejanju trga dela](#)) came into force, however, additional changes in the Act are expected to be adopted by February 2021, as the Constitutional Court found some inconsistencies of the Act with the Constitution. The Amendments of the Labour Inspection Act ([Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah Zakona o inšpekciji dela](#)) came into force on 4 October 2017.

### Ongoing debates

The Action Plan 2020/2021 of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2020 in 2021](#)) contains several measures/instruments regarding employment that are planned for implementation in 2020 and 2021. Such measures/instruments are:

- renovation of the vocational education system and pilot introduction of apprenticeships;
- promotion of vocational and professional education in a form of apprenticeship;
- promotion of practical training for employers;
- career centers for youth;
- scholarships for in-demand professions;
- strengthening counseling work with young people at the ESS;
- non-formal training and education for youth;
- on-the-job training for youth;
- incentives for long-term employment of youth;
- innovative projects for youth employment;

- development and implementation of the transition of young people with special needs from school to the labor market;
- university incubators;
- SPOT counselling services;
- public tender "First employment in the field of education 2020";
- teaching manufacturing laboratories 2021;
- social enterprises - incentives for the creation of enterprises and youth cooperatives 2020-2022;
- Mentoring schemes for social enterprises;
- start - up aid for young farmers;
- scheme for young farmers;
- student innovative projects for social benefits;
- establishment of a system for monitoring the employability of higher education graduates in Slovenia;
- Regional Center for Decent Work Celje;
- Regional Center for Decent Work Ljubljana and
- raising awareness about the possibility of mediation in a dispute between employees and employers.

In order to create quality jobs that offer adequate levels of legal, economic and social security for employees as well as further eliminate segmentation, it is necessary to implement measures that will enable the following:

- More effective actions to be taken by the Inspectorate of Labour and greater legal certainty for employees in cases concerning civil law contracts and employment relationships;
- Employers to make decisions to conclude contracts of indefinite duration and
- Greater social security to be provided to employees upon termination of employment.

Along with measures to increase the involvement of citizens of working age in the labour market, the MDDSZ wants to do the following:

- Increase the efficiency and activation of all unemployed persons and
- Conduct intensive searches for new employment during the notice period.

In November 2021, according to the ESS, the registered unemployment rate of young people (15-29 years old) fell by 1.7% compared to the same period last year and currently stands at 19.4%. While official data generally shows a downward trend in youth unemployment, according to the Youth 2020 ([Mladina 2020](#)) study, the self-reported unemployment rate among young people is much higher, which is why the authors of the study warn of so-called "invisible unemployment". Slovenia's share of young people in temporary employment is also well above the EU average.

The authors of the study make the following recommendations, among others, based on their findings:

1. Measures should be taken to limit atypical labour employment, including student work.
2. In view of the worsening situation regarding labour rights violations, it seems necessary to strengthen inspection.
3. There is a need to reduce precarious work among young people, as it increases economic, social, legal and wider existential insecurity, which lowers young people's

confidence and consequently constitutes a serious social problem (e.g. leading to polarisation).

The current National Programme for Youth expires in 2022. It is expected that the future National Programme for Youth will also take into account the recommendations contained in the "Youth 2020" study.

## 4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

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According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (2020/2021), the number of young people in Slovenia had been rapidly decreasing until 2019. Since then, the number of young people has remained roughly the same. These demographic changes and characteristics imply that in terms of long-term stability and development of Slovenian society the importance of full social inclusion and activation of the potential of every young person is and will be greater than ever before. Despite lower expenditure on social protection (as a share of GDP) compared to the EU average, the Republic of Slovenia has so far managed to maintain a relatively low level of risk of poverty or social exclusion. According to Eurostat (2020), Slovenia has the second lowest level of young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion across the EU, with only Czech Republic having a lower level. Youth social inclusion is not separately defined in the Slovenian legislation. The main agent of social inclusion in Slovenia is the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, which is responsible for implementing relevant programmes and appointing programme providers. Slovene municipalities are also involved in youth social inclusion.

To date, no specific national strategy or programme for youth social inclusion has been adopted in Slovenia. The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) addresses poverty reduction and social inclusion of young people across a number of policy areas, including employment and the labour market, education, housing and health. The Programme has several measures/instruments and indicators for its implementation. The largest proportion of funding comes from government and municipal sources or from NGOs' own assets. The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth and other competent supervisory authorities monitor the targeted use of funds.

Access to housing for young people in Slovenia is limited by a number of structural factors that include limited supply and affordability of housing for sale or rent. Another limiting factor is young people's financial situation, which is linked to their employment; as they are at the beginning of their employment career, they have lower incomes and are often employed on fixed term contracts.

### 4.1 General context

#### Main challenges to social inclusion

Despite lower expenditure on social protection (as a share of GDP) compared to the EU average, the Republic of Slovenia has so far managed to maintain a relatively low level of risk of poverty or social exclusion.<sup>[1]</sup> In addition, the [National Reform Programme 2020](#) points out that the negative trends of social exclusion and poverty stopped in 2014, and since then, a reduction in the risk of poverty has been recorded. The latest research from the Youth Council of Slovenia, '[Youth Index 2016](#)' (Indeks mladih 2016), reports that more than 50,000 young people are living below the poverty threshold. Of these, 28,000 are receiving financial social help, and 3,102 are in receipt of unemployment benefits.

According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia ([2021](#)), the number of young people in Slovenia is rapidly decreasing. Compared to 1991, when the young aged 15-29 numbered 429,800, in 2021 there were 310,600 young people aged between 15-29. That means that the number of young people has dropped by almost 10% (22.5% in 1991

compared to 14.7% in 2021). These demographic changes imply that in terms of long-term stability and development of Slovenian society the importance of full social inclusion and activation of the potential of every young person is and will be greater than ever before. According to Eurostat (2020), Slovenia has the second lowest level of young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion across the EU, with only Czech Republic having a lower level. In [‘Youth 2010’](#) (Mladina 2010), which documents the social profile of young people in Slovenia, one of the fundamental research goals related to participation and social inclusion. The study’s findings indicated that 10.4% of young people in Slovenia were socially excluded and identified a number of key challenges in this regard. “Youth 2010” (Mladina 2010) tackles the question of “loneliness” among young people, which is indirectly connected to social exclusion of a young individual. The data shows that 1,7 percent of youth feels very lonely, whereas 7,4% feel lonely. Most of the young people in 2010 did not feel lonely (44.9%). Compared to the statistical data in “Youth 2020” ([Mladina 2020](#)) the level of loneliness among Slovenian youth has significantly risen (also due to covid-19 pandemic), which means that in the past few years the exclusion among youth has increased. According to the 2020 statistics, 10,4% of the youth feels very lonely whereas 19,1% feels lonely. The percentage of youth who does not feel lonely has dropped by 14.9%.

According to the study, the socio-demographic factors that raise the probability of social exclusion of young people in Slovenia are: higher age, lower education of father and mother, low monthly income, worse material standing of the respondent’s family and growing up in an urban environment. Therefore, socially excluded youth in Slovenia come mainly from families with lower socio-economic status, in which authoritarian socialisation patterns in particular are dominant. The study also found that social exclusion has been linked to psychosocial variables and that social exclusion is negatively associated with numerous indicators of young people’s psychosocial development and physical health.

According to ‘Youth 2010’, the main mechanisms for social inclusion in Slovenia are education and employment. The National Programme for Youth (2013) adds housing and health as additional mechanisms for social inclusion of youth. The Eurofound study ‘Social Inclusion of Young People’ noted that ‘exclusion from education is a strong determinant of ending up NEET and may lead to further social exclusion. The lowest rates across Europe were observed in Slovenia, where only 4.4% of young people are early school-leavers’. According to the [data in 2018](#), Slovenia shows the second best results in the “early school leavers” phenomenon with only 4.2% of youth leaving school earlier than expected. In contrast to the increasing proportion of young people in education, the proportion of youth (15-29 years) employees or self-employees decreased from 47.9% to 32.8% in the 10-year period 2000–2010, and Slovenian youth policy is faced with a growing number of tertiary level graduates who fail to find employment that is appropriate to their qualifications.

In the period between 2010 and 2019, the youth unemployment reached the peak in 2013. However, statistical data from 2019 shows that in the period between 2013 and 2019, the employment of youth has significantly increased, leaving only 8,2% of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 unemployed.

‘Youth 2010’ also highlighted the problem of work patterns among young people that include shifts and Saturday, Sunday and evening work, all of which contribute to social exclusion. This trend towards ‘working in a social time’ among Slovenian youth differs from those in most developing EU societies, and Slovenia ranks first in the EU for temporary employment of young people. “Youth 2020” marks that 29,8% of youth lacks money, which is strongly connected to the housing policies among youth, where 20,5% are facing housing problems. A significant number of young people (31,8%) also feels the “fear of failure in school, work, profession”. This situation adversely affects young people’s capacity to achieve independence or to start a family and increases the risk of poverty.

As mentioned, housing issues and, in particular, young people’s relatively late departure from their parents’ home remain topical in Slovenia. Youth 2010 reported that ‘in the

period 2000–2010, the percentage of youth between 25 and 29 who live in a shared household with their mother increased from 45.4 per cent to 66.8 per cent'. The figures clearly indicate a stable and relatively steep trend of delaying departure from the parental home; in 2010, '92.1 per cent of youths aged 15–18 wanted to move away from home by the time they are 29, at age 29 only 31.6 per cent lived completely separately from their parents'. Across the 28 EU countries, Slovenian youth were among the last to leave home, and the role of material factors indicates a significant disparity between aspiration and reality. In 2015, Slovenia was still well above the EU average for youth aged 19–34 who still lived with their parents, although this percentage has dropped from 68.7% in 2006 to 60.8% in 2015. Compared to the statistics in "Youth 2020", the numbers have not drastically changed in the last 10 years. In 2020, the number had slightly risen, leaving 62,5% of youth between the age of 15 and 29, still living in the same household as their parents.

These data probably reflect the 'relatively favourable conditions of living with the parents (who mostly own houses), and unwillingness of the young (and their parents) to assume the risk of poverty in the early stages of managing their own household' (Youth 2010, p. 626).

The Resolution on the National Housing Program 2015-2025 discusses a "youth scheme" which tackles the issue of the housing problem affecting young people. Moreover, the emphasis is put on increasing access to public rental housing by establishing the Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia. The Resolution on the National Housing Programme for the period from 2015 to 2025 (also ReNSP15-25) adopted in 2015, defined Fund as the main state authority for the implementation of the national housing policy. The Fund engages projects and activities such as the development of the 'Community for Young Gerbičeva' in Ljubljana (based on ReNSP15-25 with the idea and goal of increasing the independence of young people between the ages of 18 and 29).

Research on homelessness in Ljubljana in 2006<sup>[2]</sup> indicates that more than a third of homeless people is aged 15–25. According to the Youth Council of Slovenia (see [Policy paper on youth housing](#)), Slovenia faces an acute shortage of apartments for rent, as 90% of these are privately owned. This rate is extremely high and has several negative consequences; with so few apartments for long-term rent, people must choose between buying or unregulated short-term rental contracts. In providing non-profit housing, four groups of young people must be prioritised: young families, people with special needs, families with several children and the long-term unemployed. However, young homeless people are not mentioned as a priority group either in legislation or in national programs. Slovenia has no register of homeless people or indeed any database that might help to identify homeless (young) people. In the absence of any frank or visible acknowledgement of the problem, it can only be assumed that there is a (greater) hidden homeless population of young individuals.<sup>[3]</sup> Slovenian youth, after leaving an institution or their foster families, are faced with the phenomenon of "daily homelessness" which is not widely discussed, but is marked as a very important issue. Daily homeless people are living on the margins of society, have low education and quite poor opportunities. According to the authorities, the number of homeless youth is rising day by day.

The Resolution on the National Housing Program 2015-2025 that is currently in force does mention homelessness, access to housing for socially vulnerable groups and finding possible solutions for solving this problem. Youth homelessness is not exclusively mentioned, however, as a cohort, youth may be seen as a vulnerable group which is affected with the homelessness problem.

<sup>[1]</sup> The at-risk-of-poverty rate is the share of people with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfer) below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers (see [Eurostat](#)).

<sup>[2]</sup> See article: Dekleva, B., Razpotnik, Š. and Vižintin, M., 2006. Kdo so ljubljanski brezdomci in kako so to postali?. *Kralji ulice*, 2(9), pp. 14-15.



[3] See article: Letnar, S., 2014, [Brezdomstvo med mladimi: predstave o brezdomnih mladih: magistrsko delo](#). Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede (last accessed 19/09/2017).

## Main concepts

In developing policy measures, Slovenia takes account of the EU definition of social inclusion as a process that includes everything from social security (minimum) to active involvement (maximum). Slovenia's approach encompasses the following elements.

- **Adequate income support in combination with help to get a job** (linking out-of-work and in-work benefits and helping people to access their entitlements). In particular, this includes a set of individual rights financed from public funds ([uveljavljanje pravic](#)).
- **Inclusive labour markets** (making it easier for people to join the workforce, tackling in-work poverty and avoiding poverty traps and disincentives to work). This includes in particular [employment policies and the labour market](#), [education and training](#), matching supply and demand in the labour market.
- **Access to quality services** (helping people to participate actively in society). In particular, this includes education, health and [social protection](#) (including social insurance, social activation and social programs, affordable housing and participation in society).

Youth social inclusion is not separately defined in the Slovenian legislation. The principal relevant Act (the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act ([Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#))) defines care for young people with fewer opportunities in the society as just one area of the youth sector (see Article 4). However, some definitions of social inclusion can be found in political and scientific papers, national resolutions and other documents adopted by youth organisations. The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) borrowed the 'Youth 2010' definition of social exclusion as 'the involuntary exclusion/separation of individuals and groups from political, economic and social processes, thereby preventing their full participation in the society in which they live'. In the National Youth Council of Slovenia's ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)) 'Youth and Social inclusion' ([Mladi in socialna vključenost](#) (2014)), [social exclusion](#) is defined as non-acceptance of an individual or group of people within their social environment, based on a range of social factors and circumstances such as race, ethnicity, culture, health, gender, language, age and social class.

A resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme 2013–2020' ([ReNPSV13–20](#)) stresses that the purpose of the social security system in Slovenia is to provide social security for citizens of the Republic of Slovenia and to ensure social inclusion. One of the three key objectives of this resolution is to reduce the risk of poverty and increase the social inclusion of socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. However, this key target is not youth-specific, and indeed, there is no general definition in Slovenia of the category of young people with fewer opportunities. This group usually includes unemployed youth with low educational background, as well as those with significantly reduced mobility because of a health condition, those from remote rural regions and those from certain minorities experiencing disadvantage and discrimination.

## 4.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

In Slovenia, there are several main actors that are involved in policy making in the field of social inclusion of youth. The main agent of social inclusion in Slovenia is the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Other government departments offices and agencies with responsibility for implementing youth social inclusion policies and

programmes include the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; the Ministry of Interior; the Ministry of Infrastructure; the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, the Employment Service of Slovenia and the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia.

Other important public actors are 16 Centres for Social Work with 62 units; 35 Occupational Activity Centres; 10 Crisis Centres for Youth; Youth Home Jarše; Re-education home Radeče; The Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children Ljubljana; The Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund and Slovene municipalities.

In Slovenia, the implementation of certain services is being transferred from the public to the private sector. Some of these services can be delivered by non-governmental organisations, which often initiate provision of certain necessary services themselves. After assessing public interest in the service, the government may provide subsidies. This model has proved particularly effective in the sphere of social welfare, where user-friendly projects of high quality have been implemented. The non-governmental organisations that are the main actors promoting the social inclusion of young people are The National Youth Council of Slovenia; Youth Network MaMa; The Youth Council of Local Communities; Pohorski bataljon Foundation; The BOB Institute; Association Centre for helping the young.

The main agent in distribution of responsibilities for implementing youth social policies is The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social affair and Equal opportunities which is responsible for implementing relevant programmes and appointing programme providers.

The responsibilities of executive institutions are as follows.

- The Employment Service of Slovenia ([ESS](#)) (Zavod RS za zaposlovanje) is a key Slovenian labour market institution and implements numerous projects. Young people mostly apply to the ESS for the purposes of accessing employment, claiming unemployment benefits or meeting the costs of basic health insurance. Among the fundamental provisions for the work of the ESS are the Labour Market Regulation Act ([Zakon o urejanju trga dela](#)), the Fiscal Balance Act ([Zakon za uravnoteženje javnih financ](#)) and the Rules on the Implementation of Active Employment Policy Measures ([Pravilnik o izvajanju ukrepov aktivne politike zaposlovanja](#))
- [The Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia](#) (Zavod za zdravstveno zavarovanje Slovenije) (ZZZS) is a public institute bound by statute to provide compulsory health insurance. Its principal task is to provide for the effective collection and distribution of public funds to ensure a high quality of services to insured persons in relation to said funds. The compulsory health insurance benefits basket includes the right to health care services and to certain financial benefits. The Institute's mandate and activities are regulated by the Statute of the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia ([Statut Zavoda za zdravstveno zavarovanje Slovenije](#)).
- The Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia ([Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo](#)) researches and analyses youth social inclusion/exclusion. It compiles and maintains a range of databases for social assistance and social services, including experimental and development programmes. It monitors the implementation of various government programmes using specialised systems of indicators and provides informational support by collecting and analysing data. It was established as a public institute by the Government in 1996. The fundamental legislation governing the Institute's work includes the Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme 2013–2020 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013-2020](#)), the Statute of the Social Protection Institute ([Statut Inštituta za socialno varstvo](#)) and the Decision on the establishment of public institute Social Protection Institute ([Sklep o ustanovitvi javnega zavoda Inštitut Republike Slovenije za socialno varstvo](#)).
- The office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as the main government actor in the youth field oversees preparation of the National Programme for Youth. Based largely

on inter-ministerial cooperation and a holistic approach, the programme addresses poverty reduction and social inclusion of young people across a number of policy areas, including employment and the labour market, education, housing and health.

The responsibilities of other important public actors are distributed as following:

- Centres for Social Work ([Centri za socialno delo](#) (CSD)) provide social services and related tasks. The Social Security Act ([Zakon o socialnem varstvu](#)) catalogues the tasks carried out by social work centers, including social protection services, tasks assigned to them by law as a public authority and tasks imposed on them by other regulations
- Occupational Activity Centres ([varstveno delovni centri](#)) implement social protection services. The Social Security Act ([Zakon o socialnem varstvu](#)) states that these centres perform management and care tasks and organise employment under special conditions for mentally and physically handicapped adults.
- Crisis Centres for Youth ([Krizni centri za mlade](#)) offer young people shelter and care, as well as other forms of assistance. These centres operate on the basis of an annual contract between the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal opportunities and the competent social work centre.
- The Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia ([Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo](#))
- Youth Home Jarše ([Mladinski dom Jarše](#)) is a public institution whose mission is the upbringing and education of children and youth who are victims of violence, neglect and abuse (so-called 'children with special needs and behavioural disorders'). It supports children and adolescents who, for various reasons, are not living with their parents or guardians. Youth Home Jarše operates on the basis of an annual contract with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.
- Re-education Home Radeče ([Prevzgojni dom Radeče](#)) is a correctional facility for juveniles with a detention order for placement in a correctional facility.
- The Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children Ljubljana ([Zavod za slepo in slabovidno mladino Ljubljana](#)) is the only public institution in Slovenia addressing the education of children with a visual impairment (including those with multiple disabilities) from pre-school to the end of secondary education.
- The [Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund](#) (Javni sklad Republike Slovenije za razvoj kadrov in štipendije) is a central national management institution for the development of human resources, offering scholarships for study and research.

The tasks and activities of non-governmental actors in the field are following:

- The National Youth Council of Slovenia ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)) is a network of national youth organisations in Slovenia promoting social inclusion of young people that published the document 'Youth and Social Inclusion' ([Mladi in socialna vključenost](#) (2014)).
- Youth Network MaMa ([Mladinska mreža MaMa](#)) integrates and represents organisations engaged in youth centre activities. At local level, youth centres are important agents in promoting youth work and social inclusion.
- Pohorski Bataljon Foundation ([Ustanova Pohorski bataljon](#)) aims to encourage youth involvement in resolving social issues.
- The Youth Council of Local Communities ([Mladinski sveti lokalnih skupnosti](#)) are operating in the field of youth work and youth policies at the local level and represent the basis for the participation of young people in local communities.
- The BOB Institute ([Zavod BOB](#)) is involved in non-formal education, youth street work, cultural activities, social entrepreneurship and promotion of young people's active participation in social events.

- Association Centre for helping the young ([Društvo Center za pomoč mladim](#)) ensures quality psychosocial development of children and youth.

In addition to the actors mentioned above, PLYA is an officially recognised non-formal education programme for unemployed young people aged 15–25 who have no occupational qualifications or competences and experience a social vacuum caused by a lack of support and help. The underlying purpose of the programme is to help early school drop-outs with no occupational qualifications to overcome social exclusion by encouraging them to re-enter and complete the educational process to acquire qualifications or the targeted level of education. The programme also equips young people with skills and competences for job seeking and entry to the labour market.

Slovene municipalities are also involved in youth social inclusion, as for example in the area of housing, where municipalities have jurisdiction to resolve citizens' housing problems. Within the framework of the National Housing Programme, it was proposed that the Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia should construct a small residential community for young people as a pilot project, either independently or in cooperation with the interested municipality, which would contribute by providing land for the project. In addition, municipalities have jurisdiction in the area of employment policy (e.g. measures to promote the employment of young people) and health policy (e.g. subsidies for young women for vaccination against HPV). Municipalities also finance some social security programmes.

One way in which integrated approaches are favoured, particularly in place-based measures in the public sector, is through rewarding the adoption of comprehensive youth strategies. This has been done – for example – by the Youth Friendly Municipality Certificate ([Certifikat Mladim prijazna občina](#)) in Slovenia. One of the key criteria for receiving the certificate is dealing with youth issues in a strategic fashion. The certificate recognises self-administered local communities that have successfully implemented vertical and horizontal youth policy measures that integrate the young generation to accelerate independence. Assessment of effective implementation places particular emphasis on the following areas: systematic treatment of youth issues, youth participation, youth organisations, youth information, youth employment, youth education, housing policy and youth mobility. At present, 35 Slovenian municipalities hold the certificate, but all municipalities are expected to meet these responsibilities. The Institute for Youth Policy currently holds the public call for obtaining or renewing (extending the validity) of the Youth Friendly Municipality Certificate ([Certifikat Mladim prijazna občina](#)) with validity from 2021 to 2025.

## **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

As stated in the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022, several ministries are responsible for the social inclusion of young people, including the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology; the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the Ministry of the Interior.

In some measures of the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Nacionalni program za mladino](#)), cooperation of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is foreseen. For example, the MDDSZ cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport when it comes to improving and strengthening programmes that promote and support the social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

The Learning for Young Adults project ([Projektno učenje za mlajše odrasle \(PUM\)](#)) is a publicly recognised general education programme adopted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in July 1999. PUM is one of the first public general adult education programmes prepared in accordance with the curricular reform. It is implemented by public and private institutions registered as providers of publicly recognised educational programmes for adults. Providers must meet requirements for a sufficient number of active

mentors. The PUM programme is currently supported by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and 12 organisations are implementing the programme (the [list](#)).

## 4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

### Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

To date, no specific national strategy or programme for youth social inclusion has been adopted in Slovenia. The [National Programme for Youth in Slovenia \(2013\)](#) identified key policies and guidelines, including the need to devote special attention to risk factors for poverty and social exclusion among young people. Its other guidelines refer to improving social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, the principle of equal opportunities for men and women and the prevention of discrimination, with particular attention to victims of social exclusion (e.g. Roma people, disabled persons).

### Network of social programmes in Slovenia

Network social programmes aimed at preventing and resolving social distress of vulnerable population groups (also providing assistance to children and adolescents) are (see the Resolution on the national social assistance programme 2013-2020 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013-2020](#)), Chapter C, point 3.2).

Other strategic public documents from the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and other public authorities (e.g. Resolution on the national social assistance programme 2013-2020 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013-2020](#)), Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act ([Zakon o zaposlitveni rehabilitaciji in zaposlovanju invalidov](#)), Resolution on the National Housing Programme 2015-2025 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem stanovanjskem programu 2015-2025](#)) also refer to social inclusion among specific disadvantaged groups (e.g. Roma people, excluded communities, disabled people).

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has proposed two Acts highlighting measures to facilitate youth social inclusion in 2016. The Amendment on changes and completion of the Social Security Act ([Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah Zakona o socialno varstvenih prejemkih \(ZSVar-Pre-E\)](#)) that was adopted in 20 December 2016 and The Rules on co-financing social assistance programmes ([Pravilnik o sofinanciranju socialnovarstvenih programov](#)) that came into force on 12 November 2016. On 19 April 2018, another Amendment on changes and completion of the Social Security Act ([Zakon o spremembah in dopolnitvah Zakona o socialno varstvenih prejemkih \(ZSVar-Pre-F\)](#)) was adopted.

### Social inclusion in other sectoral policies

Among three key objectives related directly to the development of the social protection system during the period 2013-2020, [the National Social Assistance Programme 2013-2020](#) emphasises reducing the risk of poverty and increasing social inclusion among socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. One of the strategic goals of [The Resolution on the National Programme of Sport of the Republic of Slovenia 2014-2023](#) is to help certain children and adolescents (e.g. children and adolescents with special needs, those who are socially excluded) in terms of social skills and healthy development. The [Resolution on the National Programme on Illicit Drugs 2014-2020](#) promotes specific programmes for social integration of drug users. The term *social inclusion* also features in other key documents in the fields of education (e.g. the Elementary School Act), health and housing (e.g. the National Housing Programme).

## Scope and contents

### National Programme for Youth

Section 6 (Youth and society and the significance of the youth sector) of the National Programme for Youth in Slovenia includes a special objective (Increased social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities) addressing poverty and social exclusion. The expected developmental impact is to ensure full social participation of young people with fewer opportunities and to minimise the risk of poverty. Priority subsection 15 in the National Programme for Youth in Slovenia concerns improvement and strengthening of programmes that promote and support social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Other participants include the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and social partners. Funding is/will be provided within the available resources of the budget of the Republic of Slovenia; the priority will remain in place until 2022. Key success indicators include the following:

- number of calls for proposals related to the social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities;
- number of calls for proposals on the topic of social inclusion, for which organisations in the youth sector may apply;
- number of programmes to increase social inclusion within the framework of the measures and active employment policy programmes;
- number of young people (to age 29) enrolled in programmes for increasing social inclusion within the framework of measures and active employment policy programmes, by gender;
- number of young people under age 29 who receive monetary compensation, by gender
- number of young people under age 29 who are receiving cash social assistance, by gender.

**Network social programmes** aimed at preventing and resolving social distress of vulnerable population groups:

- Programmes to prevent violence, programmes to help victims of violence and programmes to work with perpetrators of violence: information and counselling programmes and programmes of telephone counselling; program coordination, support and implementation of help and self-help
- Programmes in the field of addiction, which are intended for users of illicit drugs and persons, who find themselves in social distress due to alcoholism or other addictions (eating disorders, gambling, etc.): harm reduction programmes; accommodation programmes; therapeutic programmes; activation programmes aimed at improving the employment prospects
- Programmes in the field of mental health: information and counselling programmes with field work; programmes of telephone counselling; advocacy and self-advocacy programmes; activation programmes aimed at improving employment opportunities
- Programmes for the homeless: accommodation programmes; social integration programmes; activation programmes aimed at improving employment opportunities
- Programmes for children and adolescents deprived of a suitable family life, and programmes for children and adolescents with problems growing up: prevention programmes; information and counselling programmes and programmes of telephone counselling; programmes of coordination, support and implementation of help and self-help; day care centres for counselling, support and self-help; therapeutic programmes; accommodation programmes (specialized residential groups with a comprehensive and all-day support); transitional group homes for disabled adult adolescents after the expiry of living in a foster family or an institution

- Programmes of supporting disabled persons and other specialized programmes for organising and promoting the independent living of persons with disabilities: activation programmes aimed at improving employment opportunities; programmes, aimed at maintaining social skills
- Specialized programmes of psychosocial assistance to children, adults or families aiming at resolving personal problems: prevention programmes; information and counselling programmes; therapeutic programmes
- Programmes for social integration/inclusion of Roma: prevention programmes; information and counselling programmes; programmes of coordination, support and implementation of help and self-help; counselling with field work; activation programmes aimed at improving employment opportunities.
- Other programmes which are aimed at eliminating social hardships of the people (applicants for international protection, refugees, economic migrants and their family members, ex-prisoners, people in the process of eviction, support for the dying and their relatives and bereaved, victims of maltreatment and trafficking in human beings, victims of traffic accidents, etc.): prevention programmes; information and counselling programmes; programmes of coordination, support and implementation of help and self-help; accommodation programmes; therapeutic programmes; activation programmes aimed at improving employment opportunities.

### Responsible authority

The National Programme was prepared under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport); different ministries are responsible for different measures, as follows.

1. Measures in the field of youth housing are under the auspices of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Finance.
2. Measures in the field of youth and society and the significance of the youth sector are under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

All authorities cooperate with other government or non-government institutions (e.g. National Youth Council of Slovenia, Youth Centres, youth organisations) in the implementation process.

**Network social programmes** aimed at preventing and resolving social distress of vulnerable population groups are under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Centres for social work actively participate in identifying specific needs on the local level.

Other programmes and its authority:

- Resolution on the national social assistance programme 2013-2020 (under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)
- The Resolution on the National Programme of Sport of the Republic of Slovenia 2014-2023 (under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport)
- Resolution on the National Programme on Illicit Drugs 2014-2020 (under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health)

### Revisions/Updates

- It is envisaged that the National Youth Programme will be revised every three years, based on research related to the social position of youth in Slovenia. The current strategy (National Programme for Youth 2013-2022) has undergone no revisions or updates, with only a few changes to the action plans through which the National Programme is realised—for example, the amount of financing has changed, some

authorities have been replaced and new enforcement instruments have been introduced.

- Currently there is an ongoing [motion for the upcoming Resolution on the National Social Protection Program 2021 – 2030 \(ReNPSV21-30\)](#). A proposal for the Resolution has been submitted for consideration and is under preparation.

## 4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

### Programmes for vulnerable young people

In the sixth priority field of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022, 'Youth and society and the significance of the youth sector', one priority subfield was introduced: *improvement and enforcement of programmes that encourage and support social inclusion of youth with fewer opportunities*. For the years 2020 and 2021, the implementation plan ([Izvedbeni načrt](#)) for the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 for realisation of this subfield has the following eight measures/instruments.

1. **PUMO—Project Learning for Young Adults project (PUMO—projektno učenje mlajših odraslih)**. The programme aims to encourage organisations to hire unemployed young people and other job seekers under the age of 26 years or make them return to education, with an increase in the general level of education, under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
2. **Promoting the employment of long-term unemployed young people (Vključevanje dolgotrajno brezposelnih mladih v programe javnih del)**. This entails the integration of the long-term unemployed in public works programmes to encourage employment and social inclusion; under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
3. **Public tender for co-financing of social programmes with subsections (Javni razpis za sofinanciranje socialnovarstvenih programov s podpodročji)**. These programmes target children and adolescents deprived of a suitable family life; children and adolescents with developmental issues; Roma population with the aim of their social integration. The programmes runs under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
4. **Consultants for long-term unemployed young people (Svetovalci za dolgotrajno brezposelne mlade)**. The aim is to strengthen work with the young unemployed and to increase the quality of counselling and empowerment of young people to efficiently manage their own careers; under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

In 2017 the Government of Slovenia published a [National programme of Measures for Roma for the period 2017–2021](#). The programme discusses social security, social integration, protection of children, women and young people and suggests measures to reduce the risk of poverty and increase social inclusion and integration of vulnerable groups such as the Roma population. The goals of the National programme regarding the Roma youth are the following:

1. Reduce the risk of poverty and to enhance social integration of socially disadvantaged groups of the population
2. Improve the availability and diversity and to ensure accessibility and availability of services and programmes
3. Implementation of preventive programmes for the training of professional staff in social work centres on the guidelines and recommendations in cases of minors escaping to harmful environments
4. Financing of advisory programmes for the Roma population on so-called early and forced marriages and the consequences of such practices
5. Concerted and coordinated action by the competent institutions in the procedures for dealing with cases of cohabitation with minor.



6. Promote the improvement of the socio-economic situation of Roma community members by establishing multi-purpose Roma centres, where thematic areas intended for their integration in society and the approximation to the labour market will be implemented.

Other state measures include the following.

- **Subsidising tickets:** By subsidising travel tickets for school pupils and students, the Ministry of Infrastructure contributes to changing young people's travel habits in the interests of greater social inclusion. The Ministry allocates €39,800,000 annually for these subventions.
- The School Meals Act ([Zakon o šolski prehrani](#)) applies to primary and secondary schools, and to primary schools within institutions for the education of children and youth with special needs. The Act also regulates subsidised school meals. Beneficiaries are entitled to full or partial subsidies, depending on their family's income or other details (e.g. pupils placed in a foster family; those who are seeking asylum); under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.
- **'Subsidised students meals'** (študentska prehrana) is partly financed by the Republic of Slovenia and is intended for students during their study. Slovenia is the only country in Europe with a system of this kind. The purpose of subsidised food is to ensure that every student has at least one hot meal each day, consisting of a subsidised part (currently €2.69) and an additional payment, which every student has to pay. Anyone with student status (full- or part-time and foreign students) is entitled to this benefit under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. For more information, see Rules on Subsidised Student Meals ([Pravilnik o subvencioniranju študentske prehrane](#)).
- **'Government scholarship'** ([državna štipendija](#)). The purpose of the government scholarship is to promote education, providing a higher level of education for beneficiaries and creating equal opportunities. The scholarship is intended to cover the costs associated with the educational process; it is awarded to those who fulfil the conditions for average monthly income per family member (i.e. students from poorer families); under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
- **'Young and entrepreneurial'** (Mladi in podjetni). The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport prepared this programme in 2011 for early school leavers whose personal and social development is under serious threat.
- **'ZONE - Community programmes for youth'** ([CONA - Skupnostni programi za mlade](#)) provides psychosocial support for children, adolescents and their families, who need and seek support and assistance due to the resulting life situations. These children and adolescents from socially and economically disadvantaged families, are struggling with behavioral, emotional and learning difficulties and hardship. At the same time, they feel the need for change. Holder is The Centre for Social Work Ljubljana Moste-Polje, which operates under the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
- **'Youth center Vič'** ([Mladinsko središče Vič](#)) – prevention of social exclusion, integration of socially excluded children, adolescents and their families. Holder is The Centre for Social Work Ljubljana Vič Rudnik, which operates under the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
- The **Public Work** ([Javna dela](#)) programme offers employment to the most vulnerable groups (including youth) for more than one year. However, as the programme does not usually allow for further employment, the problem of (youth) unemployment remains unresolved in the long term. Nevertheless, it does offer an opportunity to acquire (new) work experience and greater social inclusion for young people who are long-term

unemployed. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

- **Reducing the employment rate gap between women and men** was a measure adopted within the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2020 to increase the employment rate among women, especially young women with tertiary education and other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups; under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology. The Ministry of the Interior, the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities and the Office for Youth are also involved.
- **Structured dialogue** projects have included Youth dialogue! (2012) and Youth Dialogue 2.0: Including! ( [Dialog mladih 2.0: Vključujemo!](#) 2013-2014) and Youth Dialogue 2.1: Include yourself! ( [Dialog mladih 2.1: Vklopi se!](#) ). The central theme of the third cycle of the structured dialogue (2013–2014) was social inclusion. Structured dialogue is of great importance for the social inclusion of young people and for their social, cultural and civic competences.
- **The network of expert institutions to support children with special needs and their families.** The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport published a public tender to co-finance activities for the establishment of specialist support centres for children and adolescents with special needs. Using new solutions, strategies and working methods, professionals will also provide support to families, kindergartens, schools and other institutions working with children and adolescents with special needs.
- The Implementation Plan for the National Social Assistance Programme 2013–2020 includes a measure involving inter-ministerial coordination to launch the project **'Transition into the labour market for young people with disabilities'** (Prehod mladih s posebnimi potrebami na trg dela). The aim is to increase the employability of young people with special needs to ensure greater equality with their peers; under the auspices of the Association of Occupational Rehabilitation in Slovenia ( [Združenje izvajalcev zaposlitvene rehabilitacije v Republiki Sloveniji](#) ). The deadline for implementation of the measure is December 31, 2018; activities within the framework of the measure will also be implemented after expiry of the deadline.
- **'Gostilna dela—vocational training of young people'** (Gostilna dela—poklicno učenje mladih) offers vocational training to vulnerable groups of young people (aged 17–25 without formal education, those with disabilities and those with special needs) who are at risk of long-term unemployment because of the specifics of their situation. Gostilna dela is one of the results of the 'Work factory' ( [Tovarna dela](#) ) project, which provides training for young people at risk of social exclusion. On completing the three-month training period, participants receive a National Vocational Qualifications Certificate.
- Local authority measures include **financial assistance**; in 2012, 16% of municipalities launched municipal grants for socially disadvantaged young people.
- Youth aid centre ( [Društvo center za pomoč mladim](#) ) – 'Counselling with the support programmes' ( [Svetovalnica za mlade s podpornimi programi](#) ), where they tackle problems of young people, associated with school, relationships with loved ones, social exclusion, unemployment, drug abuse, or violence. Counselling is meant for young people in need and takes the form of personal conversations.

## Funding

The largest proportion of funding comes from the government and municipal sources or from NGOs' own assets. Projects are financed principally by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth. In some cases, sources of funding for

social inclusion activities are dispersed, and little systematic information is available on this matter.

The 2020/2021 Implementation plan funding differs in various segments and the funds for realization are presented below:

- **Public tender for co-financing programmes and projects of Roma associations:** 2020 and 2021: 20.000,00 EUR annually.
- **Public tender for co-financing programmes of federations of associations of members of the Roma community:** 2000 and 2021: 193.000,00 EUR annually.
- **Public tender for co-financing of social programmes with subsections:** 1,000,000 EUR.
- **PUM:** 2020: 2.152.154,50 EUR, 2021: 2.152.124,48 EUR.
- **Promoting the employment of long term unemployed young people:** 2020 and 2021: 8,000,000 EUR annually.
- **Consultants for long term unemployed young people:** 2020: 710.800 EUR, 2021: 710.300 EUR.

Funding of other programmes is as follows.

- **Subsidising tickets:** The Ministry of Infrastructure allocates €39,800,000 per year for the subventions.
- **Youth Dialogue 2.0: Including!** ([Dialog mladih 2.0: Vključujemo!](#) 2013-2014)): The requested amount of funding was €49,648.50.
- **Youth Dialogue 2.1: Include yourself!** ([Dialog mladih 2.1: Vklopi se!](#)): The requested amount of funding was €23,710.
- The **'Young and entrepreneurial'** ([Mladi in podjetni](#)) project was financed by the Ministry of Education and Sport and the European Union (through the European Social Fund).
- **The network of expert institutions to support children with special needs and their families:** Budget is €4,000.000.
- **'Transition into the labour market for young people with disabilities':** Funding of €4,200,000 (as confirmed by Decree of the Government) will be provided by the European Social Fund and the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the period 2014–2020. One of the indicators is integration of 420 young people with disabilities annually. For this matter, according to the implementation plan for 2020 / 2021 the funding for 2020 is €1,221,086,20, whereas the funding for 2021 is €906,040,00.
- Between 2009 and 2011, the **Gostilna dela** project was financed by the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The project no longer receives any financial aid.

## Quality assurance

The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth and other competent supervisory authorities monitor the targeted use of funds acquired through public tender (see Rules on the Implementation of the Act on the Public Interest in Youth Sector, Article 20).

Some measures include monitoring of the numbers of beneficiaries reached (see Implementation plan ([Izvedbeni načrt](#))).

- **Public tender for co-financing programmes of organisations of the Roma community:** Number of young people involved in the programme of activities of Roma community organisations

- **Public tender for co-financing of social programmes with subsections:** Number of users
- **PUM:** Number of young people under 26 years involved in programmes to increase social inclusion within the framework of the measures and active employment policy programmes, by gender; target of 500 per year (1,000 in 2016 and 2017), of which 50% are women
- **Rules on subsidised student residence:** Number of recipients of housing grants and resources available; occupancy rate of beds in public and private institutions.

An [evaluation study](#) of the PUM programme found that 83% of participants regarded their participation in programme as the reason for (positive) changes in their lives. More than 98% of participants described their experience of the PLYA programme as essentially different from formal education.

The Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia issued several research reports on poverty and social exclusion:

- Poverty and social exclusion among families with children - tangible and intangible face of poverty – 2015 ([Revščina in socialna izključenost družin z otroki: materialni in nematerialni obraz revščine](#))
- Assessment of the extent discovered and hidden homelessness in Slovenia ([Ocena obsega odkritega in skritega brezdomstva v Sloveniji](#))
- Poverty and social exclusion of single parent families ([Revščina in socialna izključenost enostarševskih družin](#))
- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the National Programme for the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 ([Spremljanje in ocenjevanje izvajanja Nacionalnega programa aktivnosti Evropskega leta boja proti revščini in socialni izključenosti 2010](#))

## 4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

### Intercultural awareness

In 2013, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth Slovenia initiated the Council of Europe youth campaign **NO Hate Speech Movement**. Its main purpose was to raise youth awareness of the harm caused by hate speech. Activities during the campaign included seminars, workshops, conferences and symposia. In 2015, the campaign grew into the **Don't Hate** ([Ne sovraži](#)) movement. In Slovenia, the movement's national board is under the jurisdiction of the Youth Council of Slovenia.

Since 1995, when the Council of Europe launched the campaign '**All Different—All Equal**', the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth has encouraged tolerance, equality, solidarity and understanding, along with human rights education. The Office for Youth co-finances programmes that encourage intercultural learning and competences. The key purposes of this project are as follows:

1. Fight against discrimination and promotion of diversity
2. Interreligious and intercultural dialogue
3. Participation, democracy and good governance as the fight against structural discrimination

### Young ambassadors of intercultural dialogue (Mladi ambasadorji medkulturnega dialoga)

Supported by the European Social Fund, the project's activities focused on youth's understanding of other cultures. Through information and training activities for young

people and promotion of the accessibility of culture, the project partners ensured dissemination of the project network's effects, as well as quality of structure and content. Following a public tender published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the project was implemented by a network of youth organisations.

The Youth Centre of Dravinjska Dolina ([Mladinski Center Dravinjske Doline](#)) continues to work on a project under this initiative. The main goal of the project is to encourage greater tolerance in a multicultural society, where people of different cultures and ethnic groups living in the same place learn to maintain relations based on open interaction, exchange and diversity recognition. The project began in 2009 as a national initiative with 23 partners and was co-financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the European Social Fund. The first phase of the project ended in 2012. Because of its success, the Youth Centres of Dravinjska Dolina, Celje ([Mladinski Center Celje](#)) and Trbovlje decided to upgrade the programme, and in 2013 and 2014, it included 12 high schools from 11 Slovenian regions. In a second upgrade by the Youth Council of Slovenske Konjice Municipality ([Mladinski Svet občine Slovenske Konjice](#)), the target group was primary school pupils. The Youth Centre of Dravinjska Dolina has organised [free training courses](#) for youth, educators and leaders. This training addressed intercultural dialogue, focusing on Muslim and Roma culture, migration and refugees. The project ended in October 2016.

A number of (youth) organisations have developed programmes to promote intercultural awareness.

- The Institute Circle ([Zavod Krog](#)) encourages intercultural dialogue, including open, tolerant and equal relations among people from different sociocultural, religious and ethical backgrounds. Through intercultural education, they aim to raise awareness of intercultural diversity among children, youth and others. For this purpose, the Institute Circle implemented interactive workshops designed to understand other cultures and nationalities and based on active participation.
- The Intercultural Dialogue Association ([Društvo medkulturni dialog](#)) was established in 2007 to promote dialogue across peoples and cultures and to integrate societal and personal values. The association organises events that include friendship dinners, cultural nights, debate forums and dialogue dinners.
- The Philanthropic Charity Society HOPE Jesenice ([Človekoljubno dobredelno društvo UP](#)) implements projects that focus on learning about different cultures to raise awareness of the importance of intercultural activities among young people. The target groups are kindergarten children as well as primary and high school students.
- As an example of social inclusion projects, the Association Youth Guild ([Društvo mladinski ceh](#)) 'Social Innovators of the future' ([Socialni inovatorji prihodnosti 2.0](#)) supports young social innovators and entrepreneurs through incubator and accelerator programmes, as well as providing education and infrastructure. Targeting youth employment is an important means of promoting social inclusion, especially in the case of women, who are particularly vulnerable. Other programmes addressing the problem of social inclusion within the national structured dialogue include the following.
- Humanitas - Centre for Global Learning and Cooperation ([Humanitas - Center za globalno učenje in sodelovanje](#)) raises awareness about global interdependence and the role of individuals in the global community. It promotes solidarity, cooperation and active involvement in society through various projects involving individuals from different social and cultural backgrounds.

## Young people's rights

Advocacy for youth ([Zagovorništvo za mlade](#)): The Youth Council of Slovenia represents young people in dealings with decision-makers at national and international level. The Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia promotes children's rights on its [website](#). The Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth ([Zveza prijateljev mladine](#)

[Slovenije](#)) has its own children's rights committee, which calls for the exercise of those rights.

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

CivICT (Initiative for civic application of ICT) is a set of projects coordinated by Prof. Tomaž Deželan at the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Social Sciences. One of these projects, called 'trACES: Tackling Radicalism through Active Citizenship of Europe in Schools', tackles radicalism by developing a curriculum to combat youth radicalisation. The trACES project addresses the growing concern about radicalisation through special seminars, developing educational tools for teachers and trainers to empower them to tackle radicalisation. The newly-designed anti-radicalisation curricula for primary schools, general secondary and VET schools and youth centres and youth clubs aims to improve young people's knowledge of European political processes and facilitate European values, steering them towards democracy and tolerance. Responding to the opportunities and challenges created in the EU by the increasing numbers of refugees, the curriculum condemns stereotyping and xenophobic violence against refugees and immigrants. Based on the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, the project provides quality assurance and the translation of results into actual policies. The project is financed by the University of Ljubljana (Faculty of Social Sciences) and the Erasmus+ Programme. Another project dealing with these topics is 'Radicalisation and violent extremism: philosophical, sociological and educational perspectives' (['Radikalizacija in nasilni ekstremizem: filozofski, sociološki in vzgojno izobraževalni vidiki'](#)), which analyses notions of radicalisation and violent extremism, and the related concepts and social issues. It analyses policies and strategies to tackle these phenomena and develops pedagogical approaches to tackle the problem of radicalisation among young people. The project is funded by the Public Agency for Research of the Republic of Slovenia.

## **4.6 Access to quality services**

### **Housing**

Data on the proportion of young people living in a parental household in Slovenia (see 'Youth 2010', 'Youth 2020', Eurostat) show a clear and stable trend of delayed departure. Access to housing for young people in Slovenia is limited by a number of structural factors that include limited supply and affordability of housing for sale or rent. Another limiting factor young people's financial situation, which is linked to their employment; as they are at the beginning of their employment career, they have lower incomes and are often employed on fixed term contracts.

The Housing Act places particular emphasis on resolving the housing problems of young people and young families, identifying young people as the key target group for allocation of rented social housing by the municipalities. The Act Amending the Act on the National Housing Savings Scheme and Subsidies for Young Families Solving Their Housing Problem for the First Time was adopted in July 2007. The main goal of the proposed amendments was to provide subsidies to the broadest possible group of young families, who have started to resolve their housing problems by purchasing, constructing or reconstructing a housing unit or residential building, stimulated by state subsidies.

Youth and young families are classified as a vulnerable group in the context of housing and are prioritised in a number of state initiatives. However, their access to housing remains limited, as in the majority of cases, the number of applicants for subsidies, non-profit housing and financial assistance far outstrips the available funds.

The basic framework of housing policy and its measure in Slovenia comprises two policy documents: the 2003 Housing Act and the Resolution on the National Housing Programme 2015–2025 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem stanovanjskem programu 2015–2025](#)). Young people's housing conditions are also referred to in the [National Programme for Youth](#),

priority field 4: Housing conditions of youth. The National Programme for Youth in Slovenia defines two objectives in this regard:

1. The provision of capacity and systematically regulated availability of housing for young people
2. The availability of housing for young people and the establishment of support mechanisms

In aiming to attain the EU average for age of departure of young people from the parental household, the Programme lists the following eight priority subsections.

1. **Preparation of legal basis for the provision of housing for young people** (Ministry of Infrastructure). Indicators include the percentage of young people between 25 and 29 living with their parents and the average age of young people emigrating from parent households.
2. **Establishing favourable housing loans for young people** (Ministry of Finance). Indicator: Number of credits granted to young people under the guarantee scheme (or similar credit scheme).
3. **Strengthening and promoting the market for public rental housing (so controlling market rents)** (Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Finance).
4. **Optimising use of empty dwellings** (Ministry of Infrastructure).
5. **Promoting alternative housing—housing co-operatives** (Ministry of Infrastructure).
6. **Strengthening support mechanisms of the Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia; target population also includes young families and young couples, single and youth on leaving educational institutions and foster care** (Ministry of Infrastructure; Housing Fund of the Republic of Slovenia). Indicators: Subsidies to young families/young couples/single young people for the purchase, construction, reconstruction and rental of apartments following discharge from educational institutions and foster care.
7. **Creating a single focal point (website) where young people can find or get all information about access to housing** (under the auspices of the youth sector). Indicator: Visits to the information point (website).
8. **Evaluating existing measures (subsidies for ensuring access to housing for young people)** (Ministry of Infrastructure). Indicator: Number of evaluations.

Financial plan (funding) for housing: all 8 priority subsections are funded from the National budget of the Republic of Slovenia. The first priority subsection has additional sources from the Public-Private Partnership and the EU funds.

Based on the results of a survey of the rental market, the Youth Council of Slovenia decided to establish a housing counselling office to address young people's housing problems and to improve the activities of the Youth Council in this regard ([Si21](#)). Youth organisations have also voiced critical views concerning the suitability and efficiency of housing policies in addressing young people's key housing problems. However, only a small percentage of youth organisations actually deal with this issue.

## Social services

The National Strategy for Literacy ([Nacionalna strategija za razvoj pismenosti](#)), under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, was adopted in 2006 to promote better integration of children and youth from migrant backgrounds into their new environment. In 2009, the Council of Experts of the RS adopted guidelines for the education of immigrant children as a supplement to the Strategy. In October 2012, the guidelines were renewed to encompass the inclusion of pre-school and school-age migrant children. The guidelines included instructions, ideas and recommendations for successful learning across all participants. The Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia for 2013–2020 includes youth and migrants as a target group. The ministry responsible for education has also supported remedial classes on mother tongues and cultures for immigrant elementary school children for a number of years.

In accordance with the Organisation and Financing of Education Act ([Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja](#)), the state budget shall also provide

- funds for the drafting and subsidised prices of textbooks and learning materials for elementary school, for schools of national communities and for the education of Slovenian citizens living abroad and of the Roma;
- funds for the education of the Roma (Article 81).

Pupils and students who seek asylum are entitled to a free meal in schools ([Exercise of Rights from Public Funds Act](#), Article 25). They can also borrow textbooks free of charge from the school library. Children from less favourable social and economic environments are also entitled to receive the support and assistance of a kindergarten or school. Schools receive funds for subsidising school meals for socially disadvantaged pupils and students and for subsidising extra-curricular activities for socially disadvantaged pupils.

### **Subsidies for student housing**

The key student housing problem is the lack of student accommodation and of other forms of housing support during the period of study. The Republic of Slovenia grants subsidies to assist students financially in the form of lower rents, amounting to a reduction of at least 20% in average annual student housing costs in Slovenia. The monthly subsidy amounts to €19.50 for a stay in public dormitory, and €32 for a stay in private dormitory or at a private owner of dwelling. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, students and scholarship owners of dwellings must meet certain conditions to secure a guaranteed 10 months of subsidised accommodation annually (from October to June). For more information, see Rules on subsidising the accommodation of students ([Pravilnik o subvencioniranju bivanja študentov](#)).

Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport issued Regulations on tuition fees and accommodation in students' dormitories for Slovene nationals without Slovene citizenship and foreigners in the Republic of Slovenia ([Pravilnik o šolninah in bivanju v študentskih domovih za Slovence brez slovenskega državljanstva in tujce v Republiki Sloveniji](#)).

### **Measures promoting specific support to young families**

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is responsible for transfers to families with children in Slovenia that include (financial) social assistance, family benefits, parental benefits and payment of contributions in case of part-time employment due to parenthood, service subsidies, expenses for education of children and youth and health care for children and youth (including sickness benefit for caring for a sick child). The Council of Slovenia for Children and Families, formed, on the basis of the national Family law, performs professional and consultative tasks for the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, assists it in drafting regulations and monitoring the situation in the field of children and the family, and reports to it on the situation of children's rights in Slovenia. The Council together with the Government adopted the [Resolution on Family Policy 2018-2028 "Family-friendly society"](#) which works towards improving family-life, ensuring protection and well-being of families, with emphasis on the children, tackling the subject of young families and their placement on the labor market. The resolution focuses on nine priority areas, namely: family support programs, parental care and family benefits, alternative childcare, family social protection, work-life balance, labor market and employment, health and healthcare, education, care and education and housing issues. An [Action Plan](#) to the Resolution on Family Policy 2018–2028 "A Family-Friendly Society" was also established, as part of the monitoring of the ongoing implementation of the Resolution.

### **Crisis centres for youth**

Crisis centres for youth ([Krizni centri za mlade](#)) (KCM) have been in operation in the RS since 1995. These organisational units within the Social Work Centre are dedicated to the care of children and adolescents who have been deprived of a stable family life. The purpose of crisis centres is to offer young people shelter and care for a maximum of three



weeks, with the possibility of extension. As the sole funder for implementation of KCM, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities allocates approximately €2,000,000 annually (almost double the 2008 budget of approximately €1,200,000). Crisis centres for youth operate under the Resolution of National Programme of Family Violence Prevention 2009–2014. The new Resolution on Family Policy 2018–2028 "Family-friendly society" also deals with family violence prevention.

## Health care

Preventive systematic examinations of new-borns, pre-school and school children, youth and students ([Sistematski preventivni pregledi dojenčkov, otrok in mladine](#)) up to 19 years of age are specified in the Rules for primary preventive health care. All such examinations are covered by compulsory health insurance. School children and youth up to 19 years of age are entitled to preventive examinations such as the systematic examination in the first and third grades of secondary school, in the first and third grades of high school and in higher education.

In 2015, the [National Institute for Public Health](#) (Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje) initiated the For Youth Health (Za zdravje mladih) project to promote a healthier lifestyle among Slovenian youth, youth workers and youth leaders, who have a direct impact on young people's health. The Institute cooperates with youth organisations such as the National Youth Council of Slovenia, the Scouts Association of Slovenia and the Youth Network No Excuses Slovenia to introduce health promotion programmes in the youth sector. The programme develops educational tools to facilitate upgraded and ongoing work in this area after the project ends. The target groups are children and youth, youth leaders and youth workers and parents. Within this project, a few projects ran at local level in 2016, including It is a Health Case! (Za zdravje gre), 5 Minutes for Me (5 minut zame), Silly doping (NeUMNI doping) and Take Action (Ukrepiziraj).

Treatment for illegal drug users is available through hospital-based and outpatient programmes. For outpatients, the Centres for the Prevention and Treatment of Addiction to Illegal Drugs ([Centra za preprečevanje in zdravljenje odvisnih od prepovedanih drog](#)) (CPZOPD) offer programmes at the primary health care level within the public health service framework. Most users are aged between 25 and 29 years, and most first-time CPZOPD users are aged between 20 and 24 years.

The National Act on Health Care Services envisions health centres for students, whose prime task is to provide student health care and preventive health activities (see Article 9).

## Financial services

The government supports children and young people through [a range of grants](#), including

- social assistance
- parental allowance
- child care allowance
- partial payment for lost income

To prevent social exclusion, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities provides adequate income support to vulnerable groups. Among these measures are child benefit, subsidies for kindergartens, subsidised school meals and scholarships. The Ministry offers different kinds of scholarships; as explained in Article 2 of The Scholarship Act ([Zakon o štipendiranju](#)), scholarships are intended to encourage education and a higher level of educational attainment, establishing equal opportunities in education, encouraging international mobility and shortening the period of studying. The various scholarships are listed in Article 8.

The State scholarship ([Državna štipendija](#)) targets vulnerable youth and is issued by the Centre for Social Work. Exercise of Rights from the Public Funds Act specifies that this kind

of scholarship is for students above 18 years who are citizens of the Republic of Slovenia and whose monthly income per person in the previous year does not exceed 56% of the net average wage per person in Slovenia (Article 23). Additionally, some banks offer housing loans for young people under certain conditions (e.g. aged up to 35 years; regular monthly salary for at least one year or in permanent employment) and student loans (for all students).

## Quality assurance

Research on youth policies in municipalities from 2012 ('Lokalna mladinska politika') showed that nearly 62% of municipalities implemented programmes for the allocation of social housing to young families. However, these provisions remain quite limited and fail to meet the real needs of young people in accessing housing. The report advanced some proposals for municipality youth housing policy at local level, such as subsidising the purchase, construction or renovation of apartments and houses for young people, and subsidising rents, providing social housing and developing local housing programmes tailored to youth.

## 4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

### Policy/legal framework

The Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act ([Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#)) defines youth work as an

*organised and targeted form of operation of young people and for young people, where young people, based on their own efforts to contribute to their own integration in society, strengthen their skills and contribute to the development community. Implementation of various forms of youth work is based on the voluntary participation of young people, regardless of their interest or cultural, ideological or political orientation. (Article 3)*

The Public Interest in Youth Sector Act also specifies that state and local government represent the public interest in the youth sector (Article 6). The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth is a consultative body that assists in deciding on matters of youth and the youth sector.

Two public policy approaches inform youth work in Slovenia: a vertical perspective and the more recently emphasised horizontal perspective. The development of youth work and expansion of the youth sector in general has been consolidated in recent years, enabling the introduction of legislation in 2010. Within the vertical view, the [Youth Council Act](#) was adopted; the horizontal perspective includes the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth, which is under the jurisdiction of a number of ministries (the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; the Ministry of Culture; the Ministry of Health, to name just a few) and ensures that youth matters are included on the policy agenda.

Because there was no formal educational requirement or award to become a youth worker, the Office for Youth introduced an initiative to prepare the vocational standard and a catalogue of professional knowledge and skills standards for youth workers, based on the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth. On 2 June 2017 the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training ([Strokovni svet RS za poklicno in strokovno izobraževanje](#)) confirmed the Catalogue of standards and skills (Katalog standardov strokovnih znanj in spretnosti) that recognizes a national vocational qualification certificate for youth workers ([Nacionalna poklicna kvalifikacija Mladinski delavec/Mladinska delavka; NPK](#)). The aim is to make the NPK a formally recognised qualification, gained as follows.

1. Completion of programme for vocational or professional education
2. Verification and validation of NPK

Prior to the appointment of the group that worked on the NPK initiative, a professional group was established as an initiative of the National Youth Council of Slovenia and the Social Academy to consult on the relevant standards. The aim was to provide professional support during the process of NPK development. The group comprised a number of youth organisations, including representatives of the Social Academy, Youth Network MaMa, Trade Union Youth Plus, Youth Association Without Excuse and the National Youth Council. In this case, it becomes clear that youth organisations can play a powerful role in the creation of public policy related to young people.

## Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups

The institute [NEFIKS](#) is a youth organization, which advises young people in Slovenia to consider non-formal education as a reference when searching for employment. The institute offers counselling and tutoring in this field targeting also "young people with fewer opportunities".

The existing youth work programmes generally target all youth, however, the inclusion of "young people with fewer opportunities" is encouraged in the Office for Youth's public calls for co-financing youth work programmes (through which youth work in Slovenia is financed by public authorities). "Young people with fewer opportunities" generally refer to socio-economically disadvantaged youth (including refugees) and young people with disabilities. The inclusion of such youth into youth work programmes is encouraged, however, it is not obligatory in order to obtain funds.

## Youth work providers in the field of social inclusion for young people

The main youth work providers in Slovenia are organisations and NGOs working with youth. As these have the status of organisations operating in the public interest, they have access to a range of instruments in the youth sector that includes financial instruments. These youth work providers are responsible for

- spreading information about the needs of young people with fewer opportunities and
- advocating the interests of the socially excluded. Some of these organisations and their projects include:
  1. **Young Street Network** ([Mreža Mlada ulica](#)) by the non-governmental non-profit organization BOB Institute ([Zavod BOB](#)) offers young people in Ljubljana alternative ways of spending their time than simply gathering in public spaces. With young people and local communities, the project creates new solutions that improve the quality of coexistence. The objective of the Young Street Network is to foster social inclusion of young people through action, giving them a voice and shedding light on the issues from their perspective.
  2. **The Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia** ([Dnevni center za otroke in mladostnike – MISSS](#)) is a non-governmental non-profit national youth information and counselling service, collaborating with 16 regional and local youth information and counselling centres throughout Slovenia. Applying European standards and principles of generalist youth information work, local centres disseminate information in their local space and provide counselling and assistance in choosing appropriate information.
  3. **The Social Academy** encourages social responsibility among Slovene citizens through education, research and cultural activities, which are its three constituent units. Its main activities include various forms of education, cultural and educational evenings, production of a number of publications, cultural events and international activities.
  4. **Voluntariat - SCI Slovenia** is a non-governmental non-profit organization coordinating volunteering activities and international volunteering camps in Slovenia. It organises trainings for volunteers and volunteer actions across Slovenia, where and when they are needed, in cooperation with local groups, associations and other

organisations in areas such as nature preservation, peace education and helping the disadvantaged. Furthermore, it supports the initiatives of groups and individuals engaged in volunteer work. It also provides and disseminates information about volunteering possibilities in Slovenia as well as in other countries and brings together international campaigns that promote cooperation between people of different nationalities, religions, cultures and political beliefs, based on the belief that such mutual understanding can lead to the non-violent resolution of conflicts.

5. [Slovene Philanthropy](#) is a humanitarian organization, operating in the public interest since 1992. Its programmes seek to enhance quality of life in the community and provide advocacy for the socially weak. The central activity of Slovene Philanthropy is the promotion of volunteering.
6. [Society of Allies for Soft Landing](#) is a youth non-governmental organization active in the fields of youth culture, non-formal education, contemporary art and social and humanitarian activities. It has recently devoted special attention to projects in the field of media education, film, video and multimedia. The organisation is involved in a range of activities at local, national and international levels to stimulate the active participation of young people through different forms of media.
7. The programme 'For the Health of Youth' (Za zdravje mladih) aims to reduce and prevent diseases linked to unhealthy lifestyles among young people. It is coordinated by the national youth organisation [No Excuse Slovenia](#). During an eighteen-month programme, No Excuse Slovenia has connected several membership-based youth organisations in Slovenia (Slovenian Catholic Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Association, Youth Network No Excuse Slovenia, National Scouting Association and the Slovenian National Youth Council), the Public Health Institute of Slovenia and the national TV and radio broadcaster in a campaign to alter perceptions of the role of health in youth work.

## **Training and support for youth workers engaged in social inclusion programmes**

Youth work was integrated into the Operational Programme of the Republic of Slovenia to deploy structural and cohesion funds to support the development of quality systems in youth work, to provide a professional qualification for youth workers and to build on the education and training of youth workers. No formal education is currently required in order to become a youth worker or youth leader in Slovenia, and the various training and support provisions for youth workers are supplied by different organisations. One of the priority subfields of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 is the creation of capacity for quality youth work and the establishment of a national system of education and training for youth workers and youth leaders. Under the auspices of the Office for Youth in collaboration with the youth sector, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the National Education Institute of Slovenia and local communities, funding will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia and of local communities.

A number of organisations in Slovenia offer regular training. For example, the Slovenian Catholic Guides and Scouts Association ([Združenje slovenskih katoliških skavtinj in skavtov](#)) has a long tradition of regular training since its establishment. Regular training ensures quality development based on the needs of scouts, scout leaders and the organisation. The Scout Association of Slovenia ([Zveza tabornikov Slovenije](#)) has a similar regular training system. Its courses facilitate development of leadership and organisational skills and competences, expert knowledge in the scout's field, and knowledge and skills for implementation of supporting activities. Each course specifies terms for enrolment. Network MaMa combines and represents organisations that run youth centres or are active in youth work in Slovenia. It also provides [training programmes](#) for people working with youth and young people. The Institute [Voluntariat SCI Slovenia](#) also provides training courses for people working with youth, as well as organising free seminars for volunteers and camps for scout leaders.

## Financial support

Taking European cohesion funds into account, the funding available for youth work activities fostering social inclusion has increased. Since its beginnings, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth has been co-funding youth work and youth organisation programmes, typically providing between ten and thirty percent of an NGO's budget.

## Quality assurance

At present, there is no system of quality assurance for the field of social inclusion in youth work in Slovenia. Tanja Pipan highlighted some of the relevant issues in her master paper entitled 'The role of youth work in the integration of socially excluded youth' ([Vloga mladinskega dela pri integraciji socialno izključene mladine](#) (2014)).

## 4.8 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

In December 2016, members of Slovenia's Parliament supported an amendment to the Exercise of Rights from Public Funds Act ([Zakon o uveljavljanju pravic iz javnih sredstev](#)), enabling more children to receive free (subsidised) school meals. This means that children of families in the first as well as the second and third tax classes became entitled to free school meals.<sup>[1]</sup> These are families whose average monthly income per person amounts to 36% of the average wage in Slovenia. The amendment came into force on January 1, 2017. Another amendment was adopted in December 2017 that enables more families to get child benefits as well as free school meals. From January 1 2019, changes in family benefit will also come into force. According to them, family benefits will be higher and more young people will be eligible for state scholarship.

In 13 July 2018 the government adopted the National Implementation Plan of the National Protection Programme for 2017–2018 ([Nacionalni izvedbeni načrt nacionalnega programa socialnega varstva za obdobje 2017–2018](#)). The measures are specifically targeting reduction of the risk of poverty and increasing social inclusion; improving availability and diversity and ensuring accessibility of services and programmes; improving the quality of services and programmes and other forms of assistance.

The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth also prepared a public call for co-financing youth work in [2020/2021](#). At present, in addition to youth work, youth organisations continue to run projects to decrease social exclusion and to improve young people's active participation and mobility.

<sup>[1]</sup> For more information, see the Annual assessment of income tax ([Letna odmera dohodnine](#)).

### Ongoing debates

- The Coalition Agreement on Cooperation in the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Mandate period 2018-2022 ([KOALICIJSKI SPORAZUM O SODELOVANJU V VLADI REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE ZA MANDATNO OBDOBJE 2018 – 2022](#)) outlines several policy developments that are relevant and important for the youth and serve as indicators of potential forthcoming policy developments. Topic 3.10. titled Participation, housing policy and employment of younger generations recognizes meaningful measures to provide independence and the resolution in the field of housing problems are something young people are facing in day to day life. The document therefore sets a challenge to resolve housing problems of young people.
- A proposal for the forthcoming Resolution on the National social assistance programme 2022-2030 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2022-2030](#)) has been prepared and has yet to be adopted by the National Assembly.

There are no other relevant debates related to youth inclusion outside the above-mentioned frameworks.

## 5. PARTICIPATION

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Young people in Slovenia feel they have very little political influence, and in comparison with the EU average tend to be much less interested or involved in politics. But there is a strengthened potential for protests and participation in individualised forms of political participation, particularly those related to information technology. Among Slovenian youth (compared to EU youth) the only notably lower membership is in political parties which might be due to a low level of trust in political officials and institutions, low conventional participation and so forth.

The age limit for voting in all elections (European, national, local and presidential) and referendums is set at 18 years old. There are no plans at this time to lower the voting age limit, although there were some proposals. There is no data collection on youth electoral turnout before 2018. Young people can become members of political parties' youth organisations at the age of 15. The age limit on candidates running for office in Slovenia is 18 years old. There are no quotas or reserved seats for young candidates at any level.

The Public Interest in Youth Sector Act defines the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as a consulting body that will offer assistance in making decisions on matters pertaining to youth and the youth sector. The Council of the Government for Youth offers the possibility of giving the Government and the relevant ministries proposals, incentives and recommendations for implementing the commitment to strengthening the youth dimension in particular sectoral public policies.

There is no specific strategy for increasing youth participation. Until recently, youth participation in Slovenia was relatively unregulated by the law. The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)), covers all the important areas, so that there was no need for specific sectoral strategy. One of the key directions of the National Programme was to ensure the participation of young people in (for them) important public policies in all areas of society. One of the objectives in the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 is 'promoting the participation and representation of young women and men' (6.2.1). Different authorities are responsible for the implementation of the measures within the Resolution of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022.

There is no policy measure focusing on promoting young people's e-participation. There is also no act or strategy on this subject.

### 5.1 General context

#### Main concepts

There is no distinct definition of youth participation in Slovenia. 'Youth' is defined as relating to individuals from 15 to 29 years of age, and all measures and programmes related to youth participation are designed for this age group.

#### Institutions of representative democracy

##### Constitutional structure

The Republic of Slovenia is a parliamentary democracy: it is a constitutional republic with a centralized form of government.

## Head of state

The head of state is the President of the Republic, who is directly elected and holds only ceremonial powers.

## Legislative authority

Slovenia has a bicameral parliament composed of the **National Assembly** (Državni zbor; or lower house) and the **National Council** (Državni svet; or upper house). The National Assembly has 90 deputies and serves as the main legislative chamber, while the National Council has 40 members representing social, economic, professional and local interests, and has minor legislative powers.

## Executive authority

The executive authority in the country is the **Government** headed by the Prime Minister with a team of ministers. The Prime Minister and the ministers are elected by and responsible to the National Assembly.

## Municipalities

Slovenia does not have regional authorities. At the local level, there are **212 municipalities**, each with a directly elected mayor as the executive branch, and a directly elected municipal council as the legislative branch of local government.

## Main legal principles concerning elections

Elections in Slovenia are based on free universal suffrage by secret ballot. The right to elect a candidate, or active right, and the right to run for an office, or passive right, are optional (that is, not mandatory). Voters have many modalities of voting at their disposal: general voting (at the polling station), early voting (at a special polling station), postal voting (for voters in care in special facilities, hospitals or penal institutions), voting outside the district of permanent residence, conventional voting at home for citizens unable to visit polling stations, and voting from abroad.

# 5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

## Young people as voters

### Voting age limit

The age limit for voting in **all elections** (European, national, local and presidential) and referendums is set at 18 years old.

### Imminent plans to lower the voting age limit

There are no plans at this time to lower the voting age limit.

### Special provisions

There are no special provisions for young people in the electoral laws/rules. No legislation aims at facilitating voting among specific groups of young people.

### Turnout

There is no data collection on youth electoral turnout before 2018, as the State Election Commission had not recorded any data on youth participation in elections before that.

According to the **World Values Survey Wave 6: 2010-2014**, 36.8% of individuals aged 29 or below always vote in national elections while 33.3% always vote in the local elections.

According to the State Election Commission (Državna volilna komisija), 40.5% of young people aged 18-30 voted in the 2018 elections to the National Assembly, which is the lowest turnout among all age groups. In the 2019 European elections, 17.6 % of young people between 18 and 30 voted, which is again the lowest turnout among all age groups.

## Young people as political representatives

### Members of political parties

Young people can become members of political parties' youth organisations at the age of 15. As defined in the Political Parties Act (**Zakon o političnih strankah**), when under-age, a young person can become a member of a political party with the written consent of their legal representative.

### Candidacy

The age limit on candidates running for office in Slovenia is 18 years old. There are no quotas or reserved seats for young candidates at any level, and there are no provisions aiming to facilitate young people to stand for political functions.

### Elected representatives

The average age of the elected representatives in the current term of the National Assembly is 50 years old. As of 1 December 2016, the proportion of young MPs in the National Assembly was 4.44% (four out of 90 MPs). In October 2020, the proportion of young MPs in the Assembly is 2.2% (two out of 90 MPs). No function within the representative assembly is explicitly reserved for young people.

## 5.3 Youth representation bodies

### Youth parliament

There is a Children's Parliament (**Otroški parlament**), a body that includes representation from children (primary school pupils). There is also the [European Youth Parliament Slovenia](#), which was founded in 2013 and is a member of EYP international network.

### Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

#### The National Youth Council of Slovenia

##### Structure

The top-level legal frameworks establishing youth councils and other youth organisations in Slovenia are the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act (**Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju**) and the Youth Council Act (**Zakon o mladinskih svetih**), both of which define the National Youth Council of Slovenia (**Mladinski svet Slovenije**) as a voluntary association of national youth organisations with the status of an organisation in the public interest in the youth sector. Apart from a nation-level youth council, local communities' youth councils are also envisioned, but they have been set up only in a few local settings. Youth councils are not part of the country's fundamental institutions as mentioned in the constitution.

##### Composition

The National Youth Council of Slovenia has **11 full member organisations and two associated member organisations** (28 October 2020). It is accountable to its member organisations and composed of an assembly, a supervisory board and a board. The assembly is composed of two representatives from each of the 11 full-member organisations and a president of the National Youth Council. The Assembly meets at least twice per year. For the supervisory board and board positions, elections are held every two years. An individual can serve up to three consecutive terms and must not be older than 33 years of age on election day. The supervisory board meets at least once a year. Candidates for elected office can be proposed by member organisations, and the selection process is fully in the domain of member organisations. Nominations for board membership include written support for candidacy by at least four member organisations in addition to the organisation proposing the candidate. Elections are held by secret ballot. Public measures for facilitating greater inclusiveness or diversity do not exist.



### Role and responsibilities

The National Youth Council defends the interests of young people and promotes youth participation in the formulation of policies that have a significant impact on their lives and work. In a narrower sense, it strives to improve the situation of young people as a specific social group. It encourages the development of voluntary organising by young people and seeks to strengthen the activity of youth organisations, irrespective of their different interests and ideological or political orientation. The National Youth Council aims to encourage the development of youth organisations as an instrument for active participation by young people in public life at all levels.

The National Youth Council's responsibilities are: - the creation of youth policies - youth advocacy - cooperation with government institutions - international cooperation - preparation of various trainings and educational materials - promotion of volunteering - cooperation with academia - providing information - coordination of youth councils - statutory activities and other activities for member organisations - implementation of different projects.

The Council's role in policy-making:

- under the Youth Council Act and the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act, the National Youth Council is involved in a civil dialogue
- participation in the framework for the Council of the Government for Youth
- individual cooperation with the Ministries.

### Funding

The National Youth Council receives public funding. Its resources are acquired from membership fees and other contributions from member organisations, the state budget and the budgets of local communities, property rights and donations, as well as other sources. The main funders are the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, the National Agency of the programme Erasmus+: Youth in Action and the European Youth Foundation. When using funds, the National Youth Council is accountable to the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

## **Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth**

### Structure

In 2009, the Slovenian Government established the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth (**Svet Vlade RS za mladino**). The Council is not one of the country's fundamental institutions mentioned in the constitution.

The Office for Youth performs professional, organisational and administrative tasks for the Council.

Some municipalities have a special body (e.g., committee, commission) for youth, where young people are involved and can participate. They connect local youth organisations and represent the basic structure for participation of young people in public affairs at local level.

### Composition

The Council is comprised of representatives from youth organisations and various ministries on an equal basis. It is chaired by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport.

The Council has a president and 19 members, appointed by the principle of bipartite composition (balance between the government and the youth sector).

Representatives of youth organisations and associations:

- three representatives of the national youth organisations
- one representative of the National Youth Council of Slovenia

- one representative of the local community youth councils
- one representative of the Slovenian Student Union
- one representative of the Secondary-School Student Organisation of Slovenia
- one representative of youth organisations in the representative trade unions
- one representative of the youth centres
- one representative of other NGOs active in the youth field.

The representatives of the Government:

- Minister of Education, Science and Sport as the President
- one representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food
- one representative of the Ministry of Culture
- one representative of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- one representative of the Ministry of Public Administration
- one representative of the Ministry of Health
- one representative of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning
- one representative of the Office of the Prime Minister
- one representative of the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy
- one representative of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

The Council meets at least quarterly.

#### Role and responsibilities

The Council's work is regulated in the Rules of Procedure of the Council of the Government for Youth (**Poslovník Sveta Vlade RS za mladino**). The Council is a consultative body that proposes measures and monitors the consideration of youth interests in various public policies at national level. The Council gives the Government and the responsible ministries incentives and suggestions for the regulation of youth matters and, in particular, promotes youth participation in these processes.

The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth is envisioned as performing the following tasks (see Article 8 of the **Public Interest in Youth Sector Act**):

- to monitor, determine and assess the situation of youth in society
- to monitor and assess the consideration of the proposals on youth that relate to social changes
- propose measures in the youth sector and monitor the implementation of interests of youth in other policies at a national level
- to consider the proposals of acts and other regulations and measures of the Government relating to the field of youth work, youth policies and the life of youth in general, and give opinions on the act proposals
- to discuss current issues relating to youth and give opinions as to the competency of institutions on these issues
- give incentives and proposals for settling particular youth
- give proposals and recommendations relating to financing youth activities

- to consider the trends of programming and financial planning for youth organisations and other organisations participating in the youth sector
- to give the Government and the competent ministries proposals, incentives and recommendations for implementing the commitment towards strengthening the youth dimension in particular sectoral public policies
- stimulate the participation of youth in various consulting and decision-making bodies at national and local levels.

The activities of the Council are funded by the budget of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

## Higher education student union(s)

### Slovenian Student Union (Študentska organizacija Slovenije)

#### Structure

Different member organisations are operating within the **Slovenian Student Union** (Študentska organizacija Slovenije) including the student organisations of three Slovenian universities (the Student Organisation of the University of Ljubljana – **Študentska organizacija Univerze v Ljubljani**, the Student Organisation of the University of Maribor – **Študentska organizacija Univerze v Mariboru** and the Student Organisation of the University of Primorska – **Študentska organizacija Univerze na Primorskem**) and 58 (local) student clubs acting within the Association of Student Clubs of Slovenia (**Zveza študentskih klubov Slovenije – ŠKIS**). The Slovenian Student Union was established in 1994 on the basis of the Students Association Act (**Zakon o skupnosti študentov**). The supreme legislation governing the Slovenian Student Union is the Student Constitution (**Študentska ustava**). It serves as the fundamental legislation of the self-governing community of students in Slovenia, which determines the democratic foundations for the functioning of the Slovenian Student Union. The main organs in the operation of the Slovenian Student Union are the Assembly, the Presidency, the Supervisory Commission and the Tribunal. According to the Students Association Act, the Slovenian Student Union is independent and autonomous, acting without any other public body supervising it.

#### Composition

The Assembly of the Slovenian Student Union consists of 127 members, and is divided into a convention and a council. The Presidency and Tribunal have nine members, while the Supervisory Commission consists of eight members. Assembly and Supervisory Commission members are elected to two-year terms, while Presidency members serve for one year.

The Slovenian Student Union Presidency consists of the president of the Slovenian Student Union, the presidents of the executive authority of each of the students' organisations of the University, the presidents of the Council of Student Organisations of Local Communities, one representative from each university students' organisation and one representative from the Council of Student Organisations of Local Communities.

The Supervisory Commission consists of two chosen/elected representatives from the student organisations of the three universities and the Council of Student Organisations of Local Communities. The same condition applies to the Student Union's Tribunal.

The Assembly is in session once or twice per year, although the Supervisory Commission is in regular session about once a month, and the Presidency is in regular session once a week (except in the summer). The Tribunal meets only if necessary.

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

### Role and responsibilities

The Slovenian Student Union is the main organisation of all students in Slovenia, and represents the interests of more than 100 000 students in Slovenian universities, colleges, high schools, vocational schools and higher education institutions abroad.

Activities of the Slovenian Student Union are to:

- receive, organise and implement programmes of interest and extracurricular activities of students in different fields in accordance with national programmes of higher education
- receive, organise and implement programmes affecting the socio-economic status of students
- provide advocacy for quality and affordable higher education in Slovenia
- provide conditions for the operation and development of extracurricular forms of student grouping
- ensure the participation of students in the management of local affairs, which are self-governed by municipalities, in dealing with areas affecting the life and work of students
- enable an impact of students in the management of public affairs and in the work of state and other bodies
- enable students to have an impact on the adoption of legal and other regulation governing the life and work of students
- appoint student representatives to organs and working bodies of international organisations and communities in which Slovenia is a member
- ensure the participation of student representatives in decision-making and management of higher education bodies that are obliged to cooperate
- carry out economic activities
- provide advocacy for student positions on social issues
- perform other tasks and achieve other goals set by the student constitution and other legislation adopted on the basis of the student constitution.

The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Articles of the Students Association Act establish the connection between the Slovenian Student Union and the state. The Government formed the Government Council for Student Affairs, where all legal acts relevant to students are debated. The Slovenian Student Union must be informed when the Government is preparing a new act that is relevant to students. However, the Union's position is not binding to the Government. According to the Higher Education Act (**Zakon o visokem šolstvu**), the Slovenian Student Union names representatives for public bodies, such as the Council for Higher Education (**Svet RS za visoko šolstvo**) and the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (**Nacionalna agencija za kakovost v visokem šolstvu – NAKVIS**).

### Funding

The Slovenian Student Union receives about 96% of funds for its operations from public finance. The vast majority of these funds (over 80%) come from concession fees (sredstva iz koncesijskih dajatev). This distinction is particularly important because this is not a pre-guaranteed amount, but rather one that varies with the amount of work (temporary and occasional jobs for pupils and students) performed by students.

When using public funds, the Slovenian Student Union is supervised by the [Court of Audit](#) (Računsko sodišče) and the **Information Commissioner** (Informacijski pooblaščenec).

## School student union(s)

### Structure

The legal framework establishing the Secondary-School Student Organisation of Slovenia (**Dijaška organizacija Slovenije** – DOS) is the decree on activity of the Secondary-School Student Organisation of Slovenia, adopted by the Slovenian Student Union. The School Student Organisation is a permanent project of the Slovenian Student Union. Hence, the Students Association Act is the legal framework for its functioning. The main organs of DOS are:

- the Parliament, which serves as the pupils' representative organ and the highest organ of the DOS
- the Council, which ensures implementation of the Parliament's and other organs' decisions
- the Presidency, which is an executive organ accountable to the Parliament and the Council and exercises the annual work programme, and
- the Leader, who represents the DOS and coordinates the work of the DOS's main organs.

### Composition

The Secondary-School Student Organisation is an organisation of all secondary-school pupils. Each secondary school in Slovenia with a status of a 'legal person' has a right to have one delegate in the Parliament. The number of all delegates is around 150. The first regular session of the Parliament was attended by 130 pupils, 90 of whom were school representatives. The delegates are appointed by the democratic functioning body of the student secondary-school community at the school level. Delegates are appointed for each session of the Parliament, which is held every three months. The Council consists of the vice president of the DOS and at least five councillors, while the Presidency consists of the president of the DOS and at least five Presidency members. There is a single Leader. The Council is in session every two months, while the presidency is in session at the request of the Leader or one of the Presidency members. There are no public measures or guidelines facilitating greater inclusion and diversity, nor are there measures for greater participation by pupils.

### Role and responsibilities

The objectives of the Secondary-School Student Organisation are to: - improve the material situation of pupils - promote and protect the right of pupils - ensure the participation of pupils in activities of interest - consolidate and expand the impact of pupils on the curriculum, the learning process and the method of examinations in secondary schools - provide interconnection and representation in the organs of the DOS - encourage international cooperation by Slovenian pupils - improve the quality of relations in secondary schools - help pupils to be informed and to have an impact in civil society - provide and secure the impact of pupils on issues related to their material and spiritual growth - provide a school of democracy, ensure equality in secondary schools and defend equal opportunities for all - have a commitment to a secular and ideologically-neutral school.

The DOS, as pupils' representative, has a seat in the government's council for youth (**Svet vlade RS za mladino**), where representatives of youth debate all changes in the youth policy area.

The Secondary-School Student Organisation's decisions are not binding for policy-makers.

### Funding

The work of the DOS is supervised by the Slovenian Student Union Presidency. When using public funds, the Slovenian Student Union is supervised by the [Court of Audit](#) (Računsko sodišče) and the **Information Commissioner** (Informacijski pooblaščenec).

## Other bodies

The **MaMa Network** (Mreža MaMa) is a network of Slovenian youth centres. Currently it has **50 member youth centres** and operates as a private institute under the regulation of the Institutes Act (**Zakon o zavodih**) and the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act. MaMa is perceived as one of the most influential actors in the youth sector as it: - connects all organisations performing youth centre activities or operating in the field of youth work in Slovenia - represents common interests of members against the government sector and other persons - regularly informs members and other interested public of all activities concerning youth, and works with them - organises meetings and encourages communication and project interaction between members - offers professional help to members - ensures interaction between members of the MaMa club and young artists - enables young artists to access the youth scene and supports their cooperation - provides informal education for youth and youth workers - encourages and promotes creative activities among youth within MaMa - emphasizes principles of tolerance and cooperation, as well as social awareness among MaMa members and the wider public.

Bodies of the Network MaMa are the Council, the Expert Council, the Director, the Deputy Director (not mandatory) and the Assembly. The youth network MaMa is funded from membership fees, founders' contributions, sponsorships, subsidies, gifts and volunteering, grants, voluntary contributions, public and private tenders, payments for services and products, legacies and bequests, other resources in accordance with the law, and its own activities.

Membership criteria: the MaMa Network currently includes **50 members**, which are youth centres or perform the activities of youth centres.

The most important achievements and impacts of Network MaMa have been:

- the realization of two two-day clubs MaMa with different workshops
- the successful implementation of programmes of active employment policy
- the confirmation of a quality standard in NGOs
- participation in an international project with [Demo Finland](#),
- the launching of the strategic partnership [Boost your Possibilities](#),
- the implementation of the first group EVS project [There is a World Outside your Window](#) (which included 1000 young people, 20 youth centres, ten youth centre hostels, and 30 organisations), and
- the successful organisation and implementation of several Structured Dialogue projects (e.g., the conference with the Slovenian European Commissioner Violeta Bulc, with the inclusion of more than 380 young people and 50 organisations).

## 5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

### Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

#### Existence of legal provisions

In May 2010, the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act (**Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju**) was adopted. It defines the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as a consulting body that will offer assistance in making decisions on matters pertaining to youth and the youth sector (see Article 8). The Council of the Government for Youth offers the possibility of giving the Government and the relevant ministries proposals, incentives and recommendations for implementing the commitment to strengthening the youth dimension in particular sectoral public policies.

The Students Association Act (**Zakon o skupnosti študentov**), which was adopted by the National Assembly in 1994, ensures in Article 6 the participation of the representatives

of student organisations in all matters relating to the interest of students on national and local levels. The Students Association Act was also the legal basis for the government decision to establish a Government Council for Students Affairs.

The Youth Councils Act (**Zakon o mladinskih svetih**) provides opportunities for the participation of young people in adopting statutory and other regulations having an impact on the life and work of young people (see Article 5).

#### Levels of consultation, Consultation methods, Regularity of consultations

The **Council of the Government for Youth** is a consultative body for youth-related issues at national level. As an expert advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, it provides assistance in decision-making processes that cover student issues (see Chapter 5.3, Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth). Young people can also be consulted at local level, as some municipalities have a special body (e.g., committee or commission) for Youth, wherein young people are involved and can participate. The Council of the Government for Youth adopts positions or decisions by order of the agenda. A decision is adopted if it secures the votes of a majority of the members from the representatives of youth organisations and associations, and the majority of the representatives from the Government. The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth meets at least quarterly, with meetings convened and chaired by the President of the Council.

Young people are also officially consulted at the **Council of the Government for Student Affairs** (national level). The Council for Student Affairs discusses and offers opinion on the material relating to the establishment and implementation of policies related to student issues. The Council of the Government for Student Affairs (**Svet Vlade RS za študentska vprašanja**) also adopts positions or decisions by order of the agenda. The decision is adopted if a majority of the members present vote for it. The Council of the Government for Student Affairs usually meets every month, or at least once every two months.

In 2010, the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act was adopted, which defines the structured dialogue and its importance in shaping youth policy at the national and local levels. Structured dialogue is an open, transparent, long-term, continuous and systematic dialogue between young people and decision-makers at national and local levels in the youth sector. With this definition, the structured dialogue in Slovenia is not only linked to political debates and dialogue related to European cooperation in the field of youth, but it is a wider process of consultations with young people. The **National Youth programme 2013–2022** defines the development of sustainable mechanisms for consultations with young people as one of the most important objectives, and emphasises structured dialogue as an important part of these consultations. To achieve these objectives, the Office of Youth has introduced the following instruments:

- Administrative support for the Government Council for Youth, including prior preparation of the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act, which defined the legal basis for its functioning.
- Introducing the Mlad.si Portal, which is a website for encouraging members of the youth sector to participate in the shaping of youth policy.
- A yearly contract with the Youth Council of Slovenia to implement the structured dialogue processes on national, regional and local levels.
- Regional consultations with local key actors in youth policy-making, including young people, youth organisations, youth centres and decision-makers from local and national levels.

The main actor of the structured dialogue in Slovenia is the Youth Council of Slovenia ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)). With financial support from the Office for Youth, the Youth Council of Slovenia uses various methods for consultation with young people, namely:

- local consultations/workshops with young people on a relevant topic held in different cities across Slovenia. The conclusions of these local consultations serve as a basis for the development of further activities on the national level
- a national conference, where young people, along with professionals from different areas of expertise, discuss topics and conclusions from the local consultations, and at which a final document that is usually presented at the European youth conference, and which presents a resolution about a discussed issue, is formed
- an online questionnaire for young people, in which different opinions from a wider group of young people are collected and analysed.

## Actors

### Youth actors

Within the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, representatives of the following youth organisations defend the youth's interest (see Chapter 5.3 for more information on the Council of the Government of Republic of Slovenia for Youth):

- National youth organisations
- National Youth Council of Slovenia
- Slovenian Student Union
- Secondary-School Student Organisation of Slovenia
- youth organisations in the representative trade unions
- youth centres
- the local community youth councils, and
- other NGOs active in the youth field.

Within the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Student Affairs, representatives of the following actors defend the interests of students and youth:

- Slovenian Student Union
- Student Council of the University of Ljubljana
- Student Council of the University of Maribor
- Student Council of the University of Primorska, and
- Student Council of the University of Nova Gorica.

The national preparatory process for the implementation of the **structured dialogue** at the EU level is led by the Youth Council of Slovenia ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)). The National Steering Committee guides the process. The Committee is composed of representatives of the following youth actors: Youth Council of Slovenia and the Network MaMa.

### Specific target groups

There is no distinct provision for specific target groups. However, the Resolution of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) underlines the need to increase political and social participation among youth with fewer opportunities.

For the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Student Affairs, the target group are students.



### Public authorities

The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth set up four different working groups to discuss the most relevant topics for the development of youth policy in Slovenia. Key public authorities, represented in those working groups are:

- the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth (that provides organisational and administrative tasks for the Council)
- the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
- the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- the Ministry of Interior
- the Ministry of Public Administration
- the Ministry of Justice, and
- the Ministry of Finance.

Within the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Student Affairs the following public actors have their representatives:

- the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
- the Ministry of Culture
- the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, the Ministry of Health
- the Ministry of Finance
- the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning
- the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology
- the Ministry of Infrastructure, and
- the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

Within the process of the **structured dialogue**, the National Steering Committee that guides the process is composed of the following public actors:

- the National Agency of the programme Erasmus+: Youth in Action
- the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth
- the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, and
- the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

### Additional stakeholders

Besides an extensive list of relevant governmental and non-governmental actors that participate in listed national consultation processes, youth organizations acting at local level demonstrate relevance in the policy-making process at the level of municipalities. In accordance with the Youth Council Act, the local community youth councils provide opportunities for the participation in making policies having an impact on the life and work of young people (see Article 5). However, local community youth councils have been set up only in a few local settings.

## **Information on the extent of youth participation**

The extent of youth participation in policy-making processes is not measured separately. On the basis of minutes of the meetings, we can establish participation levels in the meetings of the Council of the Government for Youth. The content of each meeting is summarised in the news section on the [mlad.si](http://mlad.si) webpage. and the Council of the

Government for Student Affairs. The minutes (zapisniki sej) can be found on the Council's ([Svet vlade RS za študentska vprašanja](#)) webpage.

An example of good practice for structured dialogue is an open, transparent, long-term, continuous and systematic dialogue between youth and decision-makers at the national and local levels in the youth sector. The Youth Council of Slovenia strives to open a space for discussion and exchange of views between young people and decision-makers on local, national and European issues that concern young people, and to establish cooperation between young people, youth organisations and decision-makers in developing common youth policies **in Slovenia**.

## Outcomes

### Main outcomes, Public availability of outcomes

The following outcomes may be identified for the three main consultation processes:

#### *The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth*

Summaries of the meetings of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth are available on the [mlad.si](#) webpage. The summaries provide information on concrete initiatives proposed by young people. Based on the minutes and summaries of the meetings, the role of youth in particular is to:

- present proposals (simplification of initiatives from young people to decision-makers, introduction of age-based quotas, promotion of dialogue)
- present the responsibility of the work of ministries in the field of youth
- listen to reports on the implementation of programmes by the national authorities
- get information about the preparation of amendments to laws concerning youth in Slovenia.

#### *The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Student Affairs*

Minutes of the meetings (**zapisniki**) of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Student Affairs are available on the webpages of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. Based on the minutes of the meetings, the role of youth in the Council is to:

- propose a review of activities in the policy areas that are of interest to students
- propose amendments to legislation in favour of greater rights for students (e.g., that a student who graduates retains the right of student status until the end of the academic year)
- suggest debate on all matters relating to students
- hear reporting on the implementation of policies relating to students.

#### *Structured dialogue*

The National Youth Council of Slovenia has also established a web-based platform, **Pobuda.si**, which allows young people to become actively involved in decision-making processes. In cooperation with other actors from the youth sector, the Youth Council of Slovenia organised a number of events of structured dialogue in Slovenia (more about these events may be learned at the website [mlad.si](#)). As a result, two national web-pages available for encouraging consultations among young people and public authorities have been set-up:

- 'Mlad.si' ('You are young')
- 'Pobuda.si' ('Initiative').

## Mlad.si Portal

Mlad.si is a youth information and communication system. The portal is intended for gathering relevant information for the youth sector and presenting it in one place. These include initiatives and proposals for youth policy-making. It was developed by the Office for Youth to strengthen the supportive environment by providing information. Editorial policy is determined by the Office for Youth and Youth Network MaMa; the monitoring and editorial committees are intersectoral, and the proposals are also drafted and approved by the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth. Due to the heightened level of promotion for the portal, the number of users increased significantly in 2015, from 621 active users in January 2015 to 2 282 active users in January 2016.

## Pobuda.si Portal

Pobuda.si is a portal developed by the National Youth Council, and is supported by the Office for Youth. Its purpose is to expand opportunities for young people to communicate with decision-makers, to inform young people and the general public about structured dialogue as an integral part of youth policy, and to promote structured dialogue as a mechanism for the integration of young people. It promotes active citizenship, and participation and inclusion among young people. It also aims at involving young people through a variety of youth organisations and educational institutions (high schools, colleges). Through the on-line portal, young people can propose activities, actions, and measures to different actors and participate in decision-making processes. The portal is divided into three levels, depending on whom the initiative addresses: local stakeholders, national stakeholders or European institutions. In 2014, more than 10 thousand young people were informed about the portal; among them, 680 participated directly in the promotion activities. There are 165 young people registered in the portal with 163 initiatives addressed to national authorities and 87 initiatives addressed to local authorities. In addition, there are 500 initiatives sent in writing to the Youth Council of Slovenia.

Concrete results of the structured dialogue in the period 2010–2015 were:

- More than 1 thousand young people and at least 100 decision-makers were involved in the projects involving consultations among young people and decision-makers
- Young people's 104 initiatives for the local level and 12 opinions for the national level about necessary measures were presented to respective decision-makers. Among others, the initiative 'First Challenge', which aimed to provide jobs for unemployed young people, was initiated by young people and implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities
- The foundations for a continued dialogue between young people and decision-makers on the local level were established
- The Youth Council of Slovenia has been recognised by decision-makers from the national and local levels as a competent dialogue partner.

Another important result is a set of programmatic documents from the National Youth Council of Slovenia. They are 'umbrella' documents that identify the key issues in young people's participation in decision-making processes. In 2011, the National Youth Council issued a policy paper: '**Youth Participation**' (Programski dokument: Participacija mladih). The purpose of the policy paper was to define the term 'youth participation' and its areas, to determine its meaning, to lay out problems and to propose measures that can improve youth participation and the conditions needed for it. In the document, the National Youth Council appealed to all Ministries to work in the youth field, so as to provide youth participation in the decision-making processes. In addition, the Ministries could have various possibilities, e.g., to regularly include youth representatives in their departments in which the preparation of regulation is taking place.

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

In addition to the already explained structured dialogue that serves as an open, transparent, long-term, continuous and systematic dialogue between the youth and decision-makers at national and local levels in the youth sector, the following large-scale dialogues have also taken place:

- ['Youthocracy – Youth for democracy' \(2019-\)](#)

'Youthocracy – Youth for democracy' (Mladokracija – mladi za demokracijo) is a project by the Youth Network MaMa. 'Youthocracy – Youth for democracy' encourages young people to be active citizens at all levels - local (regional), national and transnational. The project aims to contribute to the key goals of youth dialogue, including actively representing young people's interests in society. The main goal of the project is to equip young people with the knowledge about decision-making processes at all levels and to actively involve them in dialogue with decision-makers. The realization of the goals of the project will be ensured by organizing and carrying out events of youth dialogue with unorganized and organized youth in local communities.

- ['Active European Citizenship \(ESE\)' \(2019-\)](#)

'Active European Citizenship (ESE)' ('Aktivno evropsko državljanstvo (ESE)') is a project by the Youth Network MaMa, financed through the European Solidarity Corps programme. The project seeks to address social issues concerning active citizenship at various levels. A model of peer-to-peer informing and learning will be established, through which young people will organise various awareness-raising events in local communities on the topic of EU citizenship and solidarity. A dialogue between youth and decision-makers will be organised where a plan of actions and proposals on young people's understanding of solidarity will be presented.

- ['We are all EU' \(2019–2020\)](#)

'We are all EU' ('Vsi smo EU') is a classic project of structured dialogue between young people and decision-makers. Within the project, young people were informed about the benefits of the EU and its mechanisms for promoting education, employment and its other priorities of the over the past five years. Additionally, young people got to know their newly elected representatives in the European Parliament. Consultations with them were organised, where recommendations concerning youth on national and European level were formulated.

- ['Partycipate' \(2018\)](#)

The 'Partycipate' ('Partycipiraj') campaign was the central campaign of the Youth Council of Slovenia in the field of encouraging young people to live a life as active citizens and actively participate in social and political life. Everyone could become an ambassador of the campaign and help to encourage young people to participate in society and take decision-making into their hands. Various forms of social activation were presented to young people. The campaign took place before the national elections in 2018.

- ['Coalition of Youth' \(2017–2018\)](#)

The 'Coalition of Youth' ('Koalicija mladih') was a project that promoted active citizenship through structured dialogue. The aim of the project was to train a new generation of active young people who would hand over their initiatives to national decision-makers and at the same time acquire new skills that would serve them to participate in effective dialogue within the project, as well as in other areas of life. The goal was also the improvement of communication, not only within the professional youth sector, but also among other actors in the field of youth.

- **'Youth deciding' (2015–2016)**

In the period from 2015 to 2016, the project 'Youth deciding' (**Mladi odloča(j)mo**) was held throughout Slovenia. Meetings with young people were prepared in cooperation with youth organisations and educational institutions (secondary schools, universities). Youth coaches informed young people about the institutions and the EU's work in the field of youth, and encouraged young people to reflect and express their views. With the guided discussion they wished to reach the challenges and opportunities for the active participation of young people, both locally and nationally.

In addition, they invited young ambassadors (**mlade ambasadorje**), who were (are) responsible for implementing and promoting dialogue between young people and decision-makers. The purpose of this project was to establish a stronger partnership between youth and local authorities, and to connect the youth sector with national decision-makers. The last event of this project was a national conference, attended by youth, decision-makers from all three levels and the experts from the field of youth. At the conference, national regulations, which were designed by youth in cooperation with experts, were introduced.

- **'Give Voice' (2014–2015)**

The project consisted of three sections. Two aimed at creating a sustainable structured dialogue and representing a set of support mechanisms, while the third represented consultations with young people. The concrete results were:

- training for trainers and multipliers in the field of structured dialogue
- consultations with young people on the current topics within the process of structured dialogue at the EU level (20 local events and working meetings with youth representatives from (national) youth organisations)
- a sustainable online platform for communication between youth and political decision-makers.

- **'Facing Youth' (2014–2015)**

The main objectives of the project were to raise awareness about the structured dialogue process by enhancing the visibility and promotion of the process, and to include more people from different backgrounds who had not yet taken part in the structured dialogue process.

Concrete results of the project were:

- ten face-to-face street activities addressing young people and presenting them the process of structured dialogue
- a video presentation of the structured dialogue
- a training module on structured dialogue and the process of consultation with young people for multipliers of the structured dialogue (youth leaders, youth workers, young activists, youth trainers)
- 'initiatives postcards' as space and opportunity to address the needs, proposals and recommendations of young people, and which were sent to the relevant stakeholders
- a consultative seminar on youth empowerment for addressing topics, such as youth participation or youth rights within the youth sector.

- **'Youth Dialogue 2.0: Including!' (2013–2014)**

The national project of structured dialogue, 'Youth Dialogue 2.0: Including!', established space, possibilities and support for young people from all over Slovenia to actively participate in discussions in the third cycle of structured dialogue. These discussions were on topics of social inclusion through youth work. The most crucial challenges concerning social inclusion that young people face in local communities were addressed. The results were published in a special publication of the project and were distributed nationally. Ten local events and a national meeting were organised within the scope of the project.

- **‘Youth Dialogue 2.1: Include yourself! (2013–2014)’**

The objective of the national project of structured dialogue, ‘Include yourself!’ (Vklopi se), was to provide space, opportunity and support for young people throughout Slovenia to actively participate in a national discussion on topics of the third cycle of the structured dialogue. These discussions outlined the theme of social inclusion of young people, with emphasis on youth employment. The requested amount for funding was 23 710 euros.

- **‘Youth About Environment’ (2012–2013)**

The national project ‘Youth About Environment’ was a project of structured dialogue on environment issues between youth organisations, youth and decision-makers from local and national levels. The main goal of the project was to open space for the possibility where young people from local communities from all parts of Slovenia could participate actively, express their voice to decision-makers and others interested in the environmental field, and show that they wanted to be involved with and influence youth politics. During the project, young people prepared and organised 12 local meetings in different places throughout Slovenia, where more than 230 young people participated, with the focus on discussions about crucial challenges that they were facing in their local communities regarding environmental topics. After all local activities, a national event took place in Velenje, where young people formed five measures and presented them to national decision-makers.

## 5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

### Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation

There is no specific strategy for increasing youth participation. Until recently, youth participation in Slovenia was relatively unregulated by the law. The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022, adopted in 2013 by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, covered all the important areas, so that there was no need for specific sectoral strategies. One of the key directions of the National Programme was to ensure the participation of young people in (for them) important public policies in all areas of society, so that they had real influence on the decisions. Thus, the measures to increase political and civil society participation among youth are included in the National Programme for Youth. The participation issue was addressed in the fifth priority field, entitled ‘Youth and Society and the Meaning of the Youth Sector’ (Mladi in družba ter pomen mladinskega sektorja), which is further divided into priority subfields. The validity of the document expires in 2022.

There was also a Programme for Children and Youth 2006–2016 (**Program za otroke in mladino 2006–2016** (POM)). The programme had two objectives: increasing the political engagement level of young people, and promote participation (i.e., access to information) and learning about participation. These objectives were implemented through different strategies.

### Scope and contents

#### The National Programme for Youth

One of the objectives in the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 is ‘promoting the participation and representation of young women and men’ (6.2.1). The criterion to meet this objective is to increase the participation of young people in elections at all levels. At the same time, the goal is to reduce the proportion of young people (aged 18 to 29 years old) who do not vote in elections at all levels (e.g., 39.7% of those in 2008 in Slovenia, while the EU average was 28.2% according to the **EVS**). The expected developmental impact is increased participation of young people in the management of social affairs.

There are five main priority subsections:

1. **Promoting conventional political participation among young people, taking into account gender balance.** Funding will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia and the budget of local communities. Ensuring the participation of young people is key to a successful and constructive involvement of young people in the life of society. With the participation of young people, they also learn about democracy and the functioning of the current political system, and acquire the skills needed for a functioning democracy, such as consultation, negotiation, lobbying, etc. With their own participation in the decision-making processes in childhood and early youth, they can also gain an idea as to how public (political) decision-making takes place. In any case, the participation of young people is more than just learning, and young people need to actually have a say in decision-making.
2. **Promoting and supporting unconventional political participation among young people.** Funding will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia and the budget of local communities. The legislation governs various options for the active participation of young people in the management of public affairs that young people do not use because of a lack of interest or lack of information. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to promoting awareness, inform young people and encourage their active participation in the following already-established forms of participation:
  - the possibility of active participation in the legislative process (Resolution on Legislative Regulation; [predlagamvladi.si](http://predlagamvladi.si), E-government), where there are no restrictions on participation;
  - different forms of organisation and types of organisations in the youth sector, which brings together young people (youth centres, local community youth councils and national youth organisations).
3. **Promoting and strengthening permanent mechanisms of consultation with young people.** Funding will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia and the budget of local communities. In this sense, structured dialogue is important. The aim of the structured dialogue is thus to deepen cooperation between young people and policy-makers. It should also strengthen consultation with young people and youth organisations at all levels, so that it will benefit all stakeholders: youth organisations, youth, youth researchers and (public) policy makers.
4. **Promoting the importance of youth participation.** Funding will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia. One of the key barriers to participation in youth organisations and for youth participation is relatively weak information about the possibilities of participation. This priority subsection also covers the need and usefulness of promoting active citizenship.
5. **Strengthening of information and consultation in the youth sector.** Funding will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia. Information is one of the key areas that affect the achievement of autonomy by young people and their active participation in society. Informing young people also includes the participation of youth organisations and other NGOs in the education system and at the workplace, and public involvement in decisions by various mechanisms (political parties, standing as a candidate in elections, directly or indirectly communicating with decision-makers).

## Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

Different authorities are responsible for the implementation of the measures within the Resolution of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022. The main two holders of the aforementioned priority subfields are the Ministry of the Interior and the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth. The holders of the measure implement the provision in cooperation with different institutions that operate in the field of the youth sector (e.g., National Youth Council of Slovenia, local youth councils). Holders for each measure are:

1. **Promoting conventional political participation among young people, taking into account gender balance** – holder is the Ministry of the Interior. Other cooperating authorities are the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, the local communities and the youth sector.
2. **Promoting and supporting unconventional political participation among young people** – holder is the Ministry of the Interior. Other cooperating authorities are the Office for Youth, the local communities and the youth sector.
3. **Promoting and strengthening permanent mechanisms of consultation with young people** – holder is the Office for Youth. Other cooperating actors include the National Youth Council of Slovenia, local community youth councils, the youth sector and youth communities.
4. **Promoting the importance of youth participation** – holder is the Office for Youth. Other cooperating actors are the youth sector and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.
5. **Strengthening of information and consultation in the youth sector** – holder is the Office for Youth. Other cooperating actor is the youth sector.

Holder of the measures under the Programme for Children and Youth 2006–2016 (POM) were the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the School Student Organisation of Slovenia

## Revisions/Updates

The National Programme for Youth covers a period of nine years, and is accompanied by the 'Implementation Plans' (adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia). The Implementation Plans follow the overall objectives and guidelines of the Programme with specific measures.

In the Action plan 2016–2017 ([Izvedbeni načrt 2016–2017](#)), two new measures were introduced by the Ministry of Public Administration: first, preparation of the web manual for youth on elections and referendums (Spletni priročnik za mlade na temo volitev in referendumov), and second, preparation of the module and implementation of lectures on elections and referendums (Priprava modula in izvedba predavanj na temo volitev in referendumov). Some of the priority subsections were entitled: *promoting conventional political participation of young people and taking into account the principle of gender balance; encouraging and supporting the unconventional political participation of young people; promoting and strengthening permanent consultation mechanisms with young people; promoting the importance of youth participation.*

In addition to the third priority subfield, one new measure was introduced: project Growing Together 2016 ([Rastimo skupaj 2016](#)).

The enforcement of Portal VEM-youth (Portal VEM-mladi) was introduced as the new instrument of the fifth priority subfield. The aim of this measure is to enable young people to access all of the information at one e-point. The holder of both measures is the Office for Youth.

In the Action Plan 2018–2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt 2018–2019](#)), preparation of the web manual for youth on elections and referendums was again listed among measures. The manual was to be prepared by the end of 2018. Also, the preparation of the module and implementation of lectures on elections and referendums was among measures again. The measure was to be implemented in 2019. Some of the priority subsections were entitled (as in the previous Action Plan): *promoting conventional political participation of young people and taking into account the principle of gender balance; encouraging and supporting the unconventional political participation of young people; promoting and strengthening permanent consultation mechanisms with young people; promoting the importance of youth participation.*

In the Action Plan 2020–2021 ([Izvedbeni načrt 2020–2021](#)), Some of the priority subsections were entitled (as in the previous Action Plans): *promoting conventional political participation of young people and taking into account the principle of gender*



*balance; encouraging and supporting the unconventional political participation of young people; promoting and strengthening permanent consultation mechanisms with young people; promoting the importance of youth participation.*

## 5.6 Supporting youth organisations

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

**Public Interest in Youth Sector Act** defines a youth organisation as an autonomous, democratic, volunteer and independent association of youth, which with its operation enables young people to gain planned learning experience, form and express their viewpoints and implement their activities in accordance with their interest, cultural, principle or political orientation, and is organised as an independent legal entity, namely as a society or an association of societies or as an integral part of another legal entity, namely a society, an association of societies, a trade union or a political party providing that the autonomy of operation in the youth sector has been ensured by the basic act of this legal entity. The National Youth Council of Slovenia is an umbrella youth organisation that includes 14 youth NGOs (12 full and two associate members). It represents youth interest in relation to national and international authorities. The National Youth Council is regulated by the **Youth Council Act**. This Act regulates the status, operation, activities and financing of the National Youth Council of Slovenia and local community youth councils. The main principles of unification for the National Youth Council and for the local youth councils are set out in the third paragraph of Article 2, which stipulates that association in the National Youth Council of Slovenia and local community youth councils shall be based on the principles of freedom of association, equality and mutual respect of autonomy of every youth organisation. According to the same piece of legislation, the National Youth Council of Slovenia and local community youth councils represent the interests of youth organisations, which are their members. The National Youth Organisation is a voluntary organisation whose majority leadership and membership represents young people aged between 14 and 29 years old. It is organised and operates on a national level, and has a large number of members organised into local units. Its purpose is to represent and develop the interests of young people, pursue youth work in accordance with the statutes of the organisation and encourage young people's integration and participation in society. In Slovenia there are 13 national youth organisations with the status of organisation in the public interest:

1. [Združenje slovenskih katoliških skavtinj in skavtov](#)
2. [Slovenska demokratska mladina SDM](#)
3. [Društvo mladinski ceh](#)
4. [Zveza študentskih klubov Slovenije](#)
5. [Mlada Slovenija](#)
6. [Zveza tabornikov Slovenije](#)
7. [Mladi forum SD](#)
8. [Planinska zveza Slovenije, Mladinska komisija](#)
9. [Nova generacija SLS](#)
10. [Zveza slovenske podeželske mladine](#)
11. [Mladinska zveza Brez izgovora Slovenija](#)
12. [Gasilska zveza Slovenije – Mladinski svet](#)
13. [Sindikat študentov, dijakov in mladih brezposelnih](#)

### Public financial support

The issue of funding of Youth Councils is regulated in the Youth Council Act. Article 7 stipulates The National Youth Council and the local community youth councils shall obtain funds for their operation: - from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia and the budgets of local communities based on a submitted programme - with a membership fee - from

property rights - with gifts and bequests - from donations - from own activities - from any other sources.

Through its given status of operating in the public interest, an individual organisation has access to different instruments (including financial) in the youth sector. Public funds are obtained in the invitation to tender and a public call from the Office for Youth. The main support to youth organisations is carried out through a public tender for co-financing of the programmes in the youth sector (Articles 17–24 of the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act). The Public Interest in Youth Sector Act states in Article 17 that the programmes in the youth sector shall be co-financed based on the National Programme for Youth. The public call shall be used for the programmes in the youth sector implemented by:

- organisations in the youth sector with the status of organisations in the public interest in the youth sector
- youth councils
- public institutes operating in the youth sector.

The financial sources shall be allocated to the programmes, which are assessed or evaluated the highest in the selection procedure. For co-financing the programmes in the youth sector at a local level, the provisions of the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act shall apply *mutatis mutandis*. Funding at the local level is less systematic and depends 'on the good will' of decision-makers in each local community. Invitations to tender are usually for youth organisations. It then depends on how much the local community's youth policies are developed; whether the invitation to tender aims to achieve a specific goal or just supports the activities of youth organisations in general. The Youth Council Act enables financial support for local youth councils. Annually, an officially published tender for NGO's provides support for programmes and projects in the field of youth participation.

### **Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants**

In accordance with the **National Programme for Youth**, the authorities have set the goal to increase social inclusion of youth with fewer opportunities. However, there is no specific provision for including underrepresented groups (e.g., youth Roma, the disabled) in the youth organisations.

There are some individual 'missions' to contribute to building a cohesive society by integrating socially excluded groups. For example, the 'Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto' (**Društvo za razvijanje prostovoljnega dela Novo mesto**) is including Roma children. The youth centre **Infopeka** and [Humanitas – Centre for Global Learning and Cooperation](#) include young migrants as co-creators of their programme.

## **5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning**

### **Policy Framework**

The National Programme for Youth sets as one of the major goals of organisations in the youth sector the promotion of participation. Social engagement and youth participation can be improved by increasing the participation of organisations in the youth sector or by participating in youth work. This represents a 'planned programme' (in particular, an experiential, non-formal education, as suggested in the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022).

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport allocates resources for the project on 'strengthening social and civic competences of professionals' in two substantive areas: 'the challenges of intercultural coexistence' (**Izzivi medkulturnega sobivanja**) and 'only with others we are' (**Le z drugimi smo**). The first project focuses on a special target group. The aim of the project is the preparation of the programme of work with immigrant

children. There are seven themes, among which are: 1. Integration of immigrants and their families in Slovenia – the promotion of intercultural dialogue and the acceptance of differences, 2. Zero tolerance for violence, and 3. detection, management and resolution of conflicts; constructive and respectful communication.

Slovenia introduced important measures in the years just before the adoption of the Paris Declaration ('Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education'). For this reason, Slovenia has made no policy developments in national education policies since the Paris Declaration.

## Formal learning

In 2019, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport planned on implementing a separate subject 'Active Citizenship' into upper secondary schools. The curriculum was prepared by the National Education Institute, however, the implementation never took place, as the students would be time-wise burdened with an additional subject more than is legally allowed. Instead, a decision was made that students will obtain knowledge on the topic through other school subjects and activities. At the upper secondary level, citizenship culture is implemented in 15 lessons per year in one grade of gimnazija (determined by the school schedule). It is cross-curricular, normally organised in the frame of so-called 'compulsory elective content'. Though 'open elective content' ([OIV](#)) is part of the curriculum, it is usually carried out in a less formal way. The OIV content is usually organised at the end of the school year or just before Christmas holidays, and are perceived as 'lighter' learning content, when the attention of students to the education process is poorer. Due to the small number of hours directly intended for citizenship education, teachers usually introduce civic education as a cross-curricular subject.

Unlike in Slovenian primary schools, citizenship education is not implemented in secondary schools as a separate subject. However, some fields of citizenship education are integrated with other subjects. For instance, sociology and foreign languages: culture and civilization and education for solidarity. One of the main aims of the subject 'Sociology' is that students develop the capability of empathy and tolerance of diversity, and so develop the capabilities for democratic citizenship. The subject has two levels; the first (elementary) level is carried out in 70 hours per school year, and the second ('mature') level is carried out in 210 hours in two school years. Through foreign languages, culture and civilization is an optional subject that is designed to be interdisciplinary. The feature of this subject is that it is carried out in two years (in second and third grade of secondary school; 210 hours). This enables development of personal, national and civic identity. The last one is 'Education for Solidarity', which is also an optional subject and is carried out in 70 hours per year. One of the main aims of this subject is to encourage a responsible, proactive and participating civic role for students.

At the primary level, citizenship education is, according to national curricula, integrated with Slovene language, foreign language, environmental education, social sciences, history and geography (ISCED 1); Slovene language, geography, history, foreign language and elective subjects (ISCED 2); Slovene language, foreign language, sociology, geography and history (ISCED 3).

Schools in Slovenia also represent an important source of information on participation, and a place where young people have the opportunity to gain practical experience in this area. For example, 'teacher guidelines in the subject curricula for history (in which citizenship education is integrated) state that teachers may use alternative forms of assessment, such as assessment of active participation in discussions and debates at class and school levels.'

## Non-formal and informal learning

Non-formal and informal learning is not legally regulated. Youth organisations (councils) should, in accordance with the law, also carry out activities in the field of public information and international cooperation of young people. Although active in the field, youth organisations struggle with the absence of a structured approach to citizenship education.

### Participative structures within formal education setting

There is no top-level policy regulation or guidelines requiring or encouraging youth participation in decision-making in their educational institution.

In Slovenia, 'basic schools (ISCED 1 and 2) have autonomy in the way they determine the organisation of pupils, but it is common practice in the majority of schools for students to elect class representatives.' Basic schools (ISCED 1 and 2) also have 'autonomy in the way they determine the organisation of pupils, but it is common practice for the majority of schools to establish student councils, usually called the Children's Parliament, which is comprised of class representatives.'

The [Basic School Act](#) stipulates that all pupils (including therefore those at ISCED 1 and 2) from a particular class are members of a 'class unit' and, together with the teacher who is responsible for this particular class, they should discuss issues at class level. The curriculum specifies the number of discussion periods, and teachers are supposed to follow the official guidelines. No formal regulation exists for class councils at ISCED 1 and 2. Class community, the pupil's community and pupils' parliament are forms of pupils' organisation that aim at the active participation of pupils in the life and work of the school.

At faculties and universities student councils are set up for the purpose of co-decision, they both function as organs of the faculty or university, and the framework for their work is set by universities.

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

Article 6 of the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act underlines in paragraph four that the bodies of the self-governing local community shall be responsible for implementing public interest in the youth sector at a local level. In addition, youth organisations and youth councils at local level have a legal background for the dialogue with the authorities of local communities. Youth councils of local communities are holders of youth work and youth policy, and furthermore are the entities of public interest in the youth sector at the local level.

The Institute for Youth Policy (**Inštitut za mladinsko politiko**) formulated the need for participation of youth organisations in a single local community. The local community has to enable youth to take part in the decision-making process. To encourage youth participation in the local community, authorities developed the web portal 'I recommend to the municipality' ([predlagam-obcini.si](http://predlagam-obcini.si)), which enabled a higher participation level for youth in the local level processes. Some municipalities have their own web portal, where people can send recommendations, for example the Koper municipality (<https://predlagam-odlocam.koper.si/>). It is the instrument of direct integration of all residents (including youth) in the decision-making processes. Similar web portal is intended for sending recommendations to the Government (<https://predlagam.vladi.si/>).

To encourage the performance of the youth council at the local level (Mladinski svet lokalnih skupnosti), the Youth Council of Slovenia and the Institute for Youth Policy introduced the new training form – **Internet training for MSLS**. Target groups for this portal are the youth councils of local communities that are at the initial phase of their operation, well-functioning youth councils that need new knowledge to upgrade their activities, and other youth organisations.

In the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022, the authorities stressed the problem that 11 Slovenian municipalities do not have youth infrastructure. That is why they set the priority subfield to improve the infrastructure activities in the youth sector. The holder of this measure is the Office for Youth in cooperation with local communities and the youth sector. One of the main areas for encouraging political participation among youth is to inform them. In addition, the priority field to encourage information and counselling in the youth sector is set in the National Programme for Youth. One of the indicators of this measure is the number of informational activities on the local level.

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

There are no partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers, at least not any long-term partnerships. Cooperation takes place mostly in a way such that a youth organisation comes to the elementary or secondary school to present its work, programme or possibilities.

There are no policy initiatives aiming to encourage the formation of such partnerships. Lately, they were suggested at some cross-sectoral conferences (e.g., '**The Key to Inclusion**').

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

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

The Office for Youth has on this basis carried out three public tenders. The third public tender was the selection of the operations in the areas of social and civic competences of young people. The tender was published in 2013. Its purpose was to co-finance projects of NGOs in the youth sector that were dedicated to the development of the social and civic competences of each active participant. The main areas were support and implementation of unconventional political participation by young people and promotion or strengthening of permanent mechanisms of consultation with young people.

The Office for Youth has also carried out two public tenders on the topic of promoting young people's active citizenship in 2016 and 2019 ([Javni razpis »Krepitev kompetenc mladih skozi aktivno državljanstvo za večjo zaposljivost«](#)), however, the purpose of those two tenders was improving young people's employability.

Currently there are no national programmes established to support non-formal learning on social and civic competences.

## **Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning**

In Slovenia, a comprehensive research project, 'Citizenship Education for the Multicultural and Globalised World,' was carried out between January 2010 and August 2011 (54). An interdisciplinary project group reviewed the content, concepts, approaches, strategies and institutional framework for citizenship education, in the light of contemporary theories on citizenship education and approaches used in other European countries. The research found that the Slovenian approach to citizenship education did not sufficiently address the general social and political environment or the issues that present the main challenges in the 21st century, and that teachers did not have sufficient skills. This research project resulted in proposals to bring contemporary global and multicultural content to the curricula of citizenship education and to provide new teaching materials.

In the publication 'Quality assurance recognition of non-formal and occasionally acquired knowledge' (**Publikacija Zagotavljanje kakovosti priznavanja neformalno in priložnostno pridobljenega znanja**), issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in 2012, the evaluation of non-formal knowledge is divided into five steps. The first is identification, the second is documentation, the third is validation, the fourth is testing and the last one is recognition.

In the quality assurance/guidelines for recognition of non-formal learning, **two legally regulated methods** are used in Slovenia. In Slovenia, two basic purposes for the recognition of non-formal knowledge are established:

1. for further integration into existing formal education (to continue interrupted education, to change the direction of education, to continue education at a higher level of education than already achieved)
2. for recognition of professional qualifications (NVQ) in the labour market.

The process of recognition of non-formal learning takes place in several phases: identification, documentation, evaluation, recognition.

## Educators' support

There are several possibilities offered to teachers, trainers and youth workers to upgrade expertise and the further development of their social and civic competences. CIVICT (Initiative for CIVIC application of ICT) organised a couple of events for teachers and students of citizenship education in the framework of the projects: Active Citizens for Europe through School (**ACES**), Developing Active Citizens of Europe through School (**dACES**) and Tackling Radicalism through Active Citizenship of Europe in Schools (**trACES**). Participants received the Certificate of Attendance after the event.

The Initiative for CIVIC application of ICT also issued pedagogical material, 'Selected topics in citizenship education' (**Izbrane teme iz državljsanske vzgoje**), which was a comprehensive document to support educators teaching citizenship education.

On the website of CIVICT, an E-classroom on a freely accessible, open educational platform (Moodle) is available for teachers, trainers, non-formal education workers and youth workers in the field of citizenship education. The E-classroom has more than 55 topics, which are tailor-made for every individual group: elementary teachers, high school teachers and youth organisations. The project has been **labelled a 'success story'** by the European Commission.

The youth centre of Dravinja Valley is also offering some of the material on their [website](#).

In 2015, the Youth Network MaMa cooperated as a project partner in '[Youth creating solutions for meaningful participation](#)'. Within the project, four trainings for youth coaches were made in cooperating countries. The purpose of the project was to increase the qualifications of trainers in the field of youth integration, democracy and human rights. In Slovenia, the trainers were exploring the methods of informal learning and active participation among youth. The key outcome of this project was a [final project publication](#).

## 5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

### Information providers / counselling structures

Different youth organisations in Slovenia provide information on the importance of youth political participation so as to encourage it. For instance, **MOVIT** (The Institute for the Development of Youth Mobility) implements different projects on the topic of political participation among youth, e.g., the project 'I am voting for my EU' (**Volim za svojo EU**) in 2013. Besides this, they provide a **free info service, Eurodesk**, which offers information about European opportunities on the field of mobility, active participation of youth in society and activities to encourage youth innovation. Eurodesk also offers information through different channels on different levels, forms personal communication, web tools, regional info points to publications and printed materials.

The National Youth Council of Slovenia prepared the initiative of a voting programme for youth for the period 2011–2015 (**Volilni program po meri mladih za obdobje 2011–2015**). With this programme, the National Youth Council hopes to be a role model. The Youth Council of Slovenia also informs youth through their [webpage](#) about different projects, news and conferences; all important for active citizenship.

In the period 2009–2010, the Slovenian office for Youth developed and designed the Central Communications Youth Information Centre – Young.si (**Mlad.si**). The purpose of this web portal is the enforcement of a complete and sustainable system to inform the public about the youth sector. Target groups of this portal are youth, youth organisations, state and local community representatives and the general public.

The Youth Network MaMa also provides information about different youth projects, conferences, opportunities and news on youth on their [website](#).

## Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

In 2014, the Slovenian Ombudsman, [Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth \(SAFY\)](#), ZIPOM (the Centre for Advocating and Informing about Youth Rights) and the Student Organisation of Slovenia organised the Youth Participation Conference (**Konferenca o participaciji otrok in mladostnikov**) in cooperation with the National Assembly. The purpose of the conference was to encourage the discussion on the current situation and to further develop youth participation.

In 2019, the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (SAFY) organised another [conference](#) on the topic of the right of children to participate. The key message from 140 participants (pupils and high school students from around Slovenia) to decision-makers was »We participate, but we are not heard!«

The project 'EU IS YOU' (**EU SI TI**) was implemented in 2014. The Government Communication Office, European Parliament Information Office in Slovenia and European Commission Representation in Slovenia tried to bring the EU institutions closer to youth and encourage youth to participate in the democratic processes. The main purpose of the project was to improve EU citizens' knowledge of civic rights, to encourage active citizenship among youth and increase their participation in the elections. The main outcome of the project is the guidebook 'EU Decision Making' (**Popotniški vodnik Odločanje v EU**).

Mentoring of trained youth workers has helped young Roma to acquire the necessary skills for active participation. In Slovenia, tensions between Roma and non-Roma communities are mostly based on preconceived ideas. With the support of the Slovenian Youth Ministry and the Youth in Action programme, two NGOs, the Society of Allies for Soft Landing–DZMP in Krsko (Slovenia) and Primi Piani in Trieste (Italy) involved six Roma and six non-Roma youngsters in the design and the shooting of 15 short documentaries on the life of young people from the Roma minority. Through active participation, peer-education and with the help of skilled mentors, they had gained basic knowledge of video production. The films were broadcast on public TV channels in Slovenia and in other European countries.

## Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

The actual situation in society and the increase of 'hate speech' are two main reasons for the projects promoting tolerance and intercultural dialogue among youth. Promotion of intercultural dialogue is in general under the jurisdiction of youth organisations.

The project Youth Ambassadors of Intercultural Dialogue (**Mladi ambasadorji medkulturnega dialoga**) had been running from 2009 to 2012. The main goal of the project was to create concrete opportunities for learning and coexistence between different cultures in a multicultural world, with the purpose of developing a sense of community and belonging. The major activity of the project was based on direct youth participation. The activities restored the circumstance for the quality informal learning of youth workers in the field of intercultural dialogue. The project had four content columns. The third one should be underlined: promotion, informing and dissemination of the project's outcomes. The emphasis was on the assurance of visibility of the project activities and on the visibility of youth and institutions integrated within the project on different levels. Four publications were issued within the project, two of them entitled 'Youth Ambassadors of Intercultural Dialogue', the third one, 'Hours of Intercultural Dialogue', and the fourth, 'Stories from a Coloured Pot'.

In 2015, the campaign 'No Hate Speech Movement' grew to become the movement 'Don't hate' (**Ne sovraži**). In Slovenia, the national board of this movement is under the jurisdiction of the Youth Council of Slovenia.

'Web eye' (**Spletno oko**) allows Slovenian users of the Internet to anonymously report hate speech and the distribution of materials depicting the sexual abuse of children. The

website was created in 2006 with the financial support of the Safer Internet Programme. There is an established cooperation with the police. Spletno oko operates under the Safer Internet Centre, and is coordinated by the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, in collaboration with partners ARNES, the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth and the Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia (MISSS). It is financed by DG Connect (European Commission) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

**The Peace Institute – Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies** (Mirovni inštitut – Inštitut za sodobne družbene in politične študije); the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana; the Ombudsman and the Multimedia Centre of RTV SLO were running the project 'With Speech on Hate Speech' (**Z (od)govorom na sovražni govor**). The aim of the project was to reduce the prevalence of hate speech in Slovenia, to empower vulnerable groups and to promote active citizenship. Within the framework of the project, the 'Anti-Hate Speech Council' (Svet za odziv na sovražni govor) was established. In the first year of its operation, it received around 50 initiatives (most of these associated with hate speech against refugees, migrants, the Islamic religion and the LGBT community).

On the 20th anniversary of the European Voluntary Service, Youth Network MaMa made aware the effects of mobility on the young people. One of the activities, '**Say Hello to Tolerance**', was carried out in October 2016. Sixteen young people from eight different European countries participated. The main goal of the project was for the volunteers to gain real insight into the situation in society through fieldwork, and with that mark the promotion campaign in which they would spread the voice of tolerance.

In 2016, [Humanitas – Centre for Global Learning and Communication](#) started with the project 'Through the Refugee's Eyes'. An interactive theatre performance was made in co-creation with persons with refugee experience, in which the audience/participants are put into the role of refugees. After the play, participants meet the people with the refugee experience, whom they »played« during the performance. The goal of the project is to promote critical thinking, tolerance and intercultural dialogue. The play was performed more than 60 times, mainly for primary and high-school youth.

### **Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication**

There are no policy frameworks or guidelines on transparent public communication targeting young people, but there were some initiatives on this topic.

Slovenian youth organisations integrate into public decision-making by the structured dialogue (**Strukturiran dialog**). It is an instrument by which youth, youth organisations, youth councils and researchers from the field of youth actively integrate into political dialogue with authorities responsible for youth policy. The dialogue can be implemented on a local, regional, national or European level.

In May 2016, Youth Network Mama organised 'Training Relations and Public Communication in Youth Centres' (**Odnosi in komuniciranje z javnostmi v mladinskih centrih**). Through the training, 20 participants from different youth organisations learned about the theoretical basis and practical solutions in the field of communication's goals, tools and channels. Furthermore, each of them prepared a draft of communication's plan along the whole structure for their own project, which was implemented by their organisations.

## **5.9 E-participation**

Type of measure

There is no policy measure focusing on promoting young people's e-participation. There is also no act or strategy on this subject, nor has there been a public debate. This subject is not very well studied in Slovenia, and there are no guidelines as to how to demonstrate



e-participation to young people, and especially how to educate them for proper use of IT (e.g., online social networks). Otherwise, non-conventional political participation (which includes e-participation, social networks, etc.) is part of the National Programme for Youth – second priority subsection: Promoting and supporting unconventional political participation of young people.

There are some projects from the organisations:

- In Slovenia, the leading role on the field of e-participation belongs to the [Institute for Electronic Participation](#) (INePA- Inštitut za elektronsko participacijo). The Institute is a professional, non-governmental and non-profit organisation, active in different areas of public policy, such as electronic participation (participation, cooperation and integration), digital democracy (electronic, internet, virtual and cybernetic democracy), electronic government, electronic administration and open doors. Furthermore, the Institute also works on different projects that specifically include youth. One of these projects is [DEEP-linking Youth 2015–2017](#). The core objective of this project is to explore how e-participation can foster active participation of youth in democratic life, including mapping existing youth mobility channels, developing online content and creating different analytic tools for monitoring. As mentioned on the project's website, one of the main outcomes is the 'Digital Dashboard'. The latter could be used by policymakers to understand the concerns of youth and to take into account their perspectives in the policy-making process.
- Because of the low level of youth political participation, the Youth Council of Slovenia prepared a project 'Initiative.si: Youth for a Better Society' ([Pobuda.si: Mladi za boljše družbo](#)). The key result of the project was, on the one hand, an interactive online portal, which promotes youth participation, and on the other the portal which enables youth to pass on their initiatives for improvement of their environment and situation.

A new tool available is [Parlameter](#). Parlameter was produced within the Institute 'Today Is a New Day' ([Inštitut Danes je nov dan](#)), which focuses on digital political participation, transparency and control. With analysing ballots and transcripts of appearances, it facilitates monitoring of the work of the National Assembly. User-friendly visual design and technologically advanced modular design increase the transparency of the operation of the most important democratic institutions and facilitate effective access to the decision-making process. Because of the absence of publicly available machine-readable parliamentary data, Parlameter uses the documents from the websites [dz-rs.si](#) and [dvk-rs.si](#).

#### ICT tools used

There are/were some tools where youth can participate:

- the web portal 'Initiative' ([pobuda.si](#)) – where youth can write their recommendation to the municipality, to the country or to the EU
- the web portal 'I recommend to the municipality' ([predlagam-obcini.si](#))
- Student organisation of the University of Ljubljana prepared the project 'Student, where does the shoe pinch?' ([Študent, kje pa tebe čevelj žuli?](#)) – the purpose of the campaign was to identify the problems students encountered during the study.

#### Data or studies

According to the research Youth 2010, young people in 2009 were more involved in IT activities (web forums, articles on media websites, internet political forum or discussion group) compared to adults. The research, Slovenian Youth 2013, showed that 81% of Slovenian youth (aged 16–25) acquired information about politics from the Internet. According to the data of the Slovenian Youth 2018/2019 research, young people in Slovenia spend 5 or more hours on the Internet each day. 66% of youth 'often' read news/search for information on the Internet.

According to the [Eurostat survey](#), 15% of Slovenian youth used the Internet for posting opinions (accessing or posting opinions on websites for discussing civic and political issues) from 2010–2013. Seventy-three percent of young people in Slovenia used the Internet for interaction with public authorities in 2014, as compared to 77% in 2013, 69% in 2012 and 64% in 2011 (see the [Eurostat survey](#)). According to the [Eurostat data](#), 10% of young (16–29 years) people in Slovenia use the Internet for civic or political participation, which remained the same since 2017. Compared to the other countries, this is 10% less than the EU average.

## 5.10 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

In 2020, the Office for Youth issued a public call for co-financing of youth work in 2020 and 2021 ([Javni poziv za sofinanciranje programov mladinskega dela v letih 2020 in 2021](#)). Conditions and criteria for invitations to tender were, among others: promoting and supporting participation of young people and representation of young women and men.

The new [Action Plan 2020–2021 of the National Programme for Youth](#) was adopted in September 2020. One of the goals of the Plan is also promoting and supporting participation of young people and representation of young women and men. The working group of the 'Council of the Government for Youth for Monitoring the Implementation of the National Programme for Youth' meets regularly. The Office for Youth receives notes, suggestions and comments about youth organisations and ministries. Ministries also present their future plans (e.g., making an online manual on participation – the measure of the Ministry of Public Administration).

The working group for the preparation of the new proposal for the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act was also established. Proposals for amendments to the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act tackle the need to:

- define the category of young people more accurately
- make more concrete and define more specifically the conditions that the organisations in the youth sector must meet to obtain the status of 'work in the public interest' in the youth sector
- provide the legal basis for the transfer of personal data to the Office for Youth, which are necessary for verifying compliance with the conditions for obtaining the status of 'work in the public interest'
- to set up and define the role of the Council for Research in the Youth Field responsible for research guidance and development of indicators
- regulate the procedure of granting public authorisation to carry out the tasks of the national agencies and focal points with accompanying activities.

There have been no revisions of the Act yet.

In 2020, the Ministry of Public Affairs reaffirmed their [position on E-elections](#): »The current electoral legislation does not generally provide forms of voting that do not require the personal presence of the voter at the polling station, and above all does not stipulate an online or internet electronic method of voting.«

### Ongoing debates

A pending issue is the repeatedly expressed proposal/request to include youth representatives in social dialogue and assure them a 'seat at the table'. There has been no consensus yet.

## 6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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The share of young people included in the education system has been growing much faster in Slovenia compared to the EU average, and the share of dropouts in secondary school is among the lowest in the EU countries. Moreover, the share of higher-education students aged between 20 and 24 was by far the highest in EU. Although the share of population between age 19 and 24 who studies, decreased in the last five years in Slovenia by two percentage points, almost half (47,4%) of young people are studying. High enrolment in tertiary education and extended schooling period of young people (15-24) is related to the fact that majority of study programs are publicly funded, therefore students are not required to pay any tuition fees. Whereas young people like the inclusiveness and friendliness of the education system, they express considerable dissatisfaction with the poor connection between the education system and the needs of the labour market.

The Ministry of education, science and sport is the main governmental authority for education and training. The Ministry is directly responsible for the drafting, evaluation, analysis and implementation of regulations for all levels of education. The Ministry consists of numerous services, directorates and sectors covering specific areas. The Council of the Government for Students Affairs ([Svet Vlade RS za študentska vprašanja](#)) is an expert and consultative body of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, which carries out expert tasks for it and provides assistance in deciding on students' issues.

To date, no specific national strategy or programme to prevent ELET has been adopted in Slovenia as ELET is not detected as a problem. The trigger for young people to remain in education is social security, as they gain some benefits, e.g. subsidized food, subsidized transport tickets etc.

The Vocational and Technical Education Act is the legal basis for the recognition of informally acquired knowledge in secondary vocational education. The certification of non-formally acquired knowledge for acquiring a qualification is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. There is no national system for validation and thus skills audits are also a matter of each institution or field.

One of the objectives of the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) is to increase the international (study) mobility of young people in Slovenia. Mobility of pupils in Slovenia is mainly enabled within the framework of the EU Programme Erasmus+.

Slovenia has no coherent document nor strategy for youth in the field of media literacy and safe use of new media.

### 6.1 General context

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

The share of young people included in the education system has been growing quickly in Slovenia compared to the EU-27 average, and the share of dropouts from secondary school in Slovenia is the lowest among EU-27 countries (in 2015 it was 5.4% in the age group 18–24 years, while in EU-27 it was 11%), according to the [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije). Moreover, the share of higher education students aged 20 to 24 was in 2016/2017 by far the highest in EU-27. The proportion of youth between 15 and 24 years of age, who are enrolled in education, was increasing up until 2008. In that time, it was considerably higher than the EU-27 average.

However, there was an observable trend of declining enrolment in tertiary education by the academic year 2016/2017 when 79 547 students were enrolled, which is about 1 000 less than the year before and 36 000 fewer than ten years prior (2006/07). The enrolment

in the academic year 2016/2017 was lower than any year since 1998/99. In the last two academic years (2019/20 and 2020/21), the number of students is on the rise again, [according to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia](#). In 2020/21, almost 82 700 students were enrolled in tertiary education, an increase of 8% compared to the 2019/20 academic year. According to the [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia](#), Slovenia still ranks among the leading countries in the European Union regarding the number of students per total inhabitants. The reduction in enrolment in the previous academic years can be attributed to smaller generations of young people. The enrolment rate among 15-19 year-olds is 94%, one of the highest among OECD members. In 2016, particularly high percentage of young people were enrolled in tertiary education at the age of 19 and 20: 54% and 57% respectively, compared to 34% and 39% on average among OECD countries ([OECD, 2019](#)).

In Slovenia, the higher education system underwent Bologna reform in 2004 and updated study programmes were introduced gradually. In September 2016, the so-called pre-Bologna study programmes expired, meaning that students were allowed to graduate under the parameters of the old study programmes by the end of September 2016. About 15 000 students successfully finished their studies before the end of the pre-Bologna programmes. Considering this circumstance, the statistical picture of graduates of higher education was influenced strongly. In 2015, 13 847 students successfully completed higher education studies. In 2016, this number more than doubled to 29 135, with half of graduates coming from pre-Bologna programmes.

High enrolment in tertiary education and extended schooling of young people (aged 15-24) is related to a high percentage of young people enrolled in upper secondary education programmes and programmes for continuing education at the tertiary level. There is a favourable ratio between the number of applicants and the overall number of slots available in higher vocational programmes and higher education programmes available due to the absence of tuition fees for full-time level 1 and 2 studies and the benefits of student status.

Data from the [Eurostudent](#) international project show that in Slovenia, students with parents from lower levels of educational attainment are underrepresented in higher education, which reflects unequal access to education. On the other hand, students coming from families with higher educational attainment (university education) are over-represented. OECD research ([2016](#)) supports this statement, as it finds that upward educational mobility remains a challenge. Only 9% of adults whose parents have not attained upper secondary education attain tertiary education, compared to 59% among those with at least one tertiary-educated parent. In addition, data show that uneven access to higher education in Slovenia also appears connected to the financial capacity of parents. Slovenian students who report financial difficulties, in 42.2 % of cases, think their parents' situation is not good. It should be noted that some public student support is dependent on the financial situation of their families.

There is no research or survey focusing exclusively on the involvement of young people in non-formal learning. However, some [statistical data](#) can be harvested from the [Adult Education Survey](#) (Anketa o izobraževanju odraslih) that is conducted by the Slovene Statistical Office every 5 years. The [data from the survey](#) done in 2016 show that 43 606 young people (aged 18-24), or 30.4% of all young people in that age cohort, participated in non-formal learning in [2016](#). The data is comparable with the findings of the national research report on vulnerable groups in the labour market ([Ranljive skupine na trgu dela v Sloveniji](#)). Another research study from 2016 (Accessibility of Services: [Dostopnost do storitev](#)) presents data on inclusion in non-formal education, but there is no special data on percentage of youth in non-formal education.

Among all students in the academic year 2020/2021, there were 7 600 or 9% mobile students (see the [Statistical Office](#)), which is 5% more mobile students than in the academic year 2016/17.

## Organisation of the education and training system

The White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia ([Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji 2011](#)) represents fundamental, systematic, professional reflection on the structure and operation of the Slovene education system, and proposes solutions assuring quality practice on the field of pre-school, compulsory basic, upper secondary, adult and music education. A brief overview of the structure of the national education system in Slovenia can be found on the [Eurydice website](#).

The majority of study programmes are publicly funded; therefore, students are not required to pay any tuition fees. Public higher education institutions and private higher education institutions that hold a concession cannot charge fees to citizens of the Republic of Slovenia or citizens of other EU Member States for studies in accredited full-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. In the academic year 2016/2017, the government Decree on the co-funding of doctoral studies ([Uredba o sofinanciranju doktorskega študija](#)) came into effect. However, the Decree was altered for the upcoming academic year, granting co-funding of doctoral studies only for public higher education institutions. Applicants can apply for co-funding up to 4 000 euros per academic year.

In Slovenia, basic school education is compulsory. Basic school is comprised of primary (level 1 by the International Standard Classification of Education - ISCED) and lower (level 2 by the ISCED) secondary education. In line with the [Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia](#)'s Article 57, basic school education is both compulsory and funded by the public revenues. Children must enrol in first grade at the age of six. Schools implement the single-structure curriculum over the course of nine years, so pupils typically conclude basic school education at the age of 15. Enrollment in the secondary school (level 3 by the ISCED) is typically made at the age of 15 where education takes 2-5 years, depending on the programme (vocational, professional or general). For students that conclude secondary education, enrolment in the tertiary education (level 5-7 by the ISCED) is typically made at the age of 19.

The main organisations of formal education are listed below:

- Upper Secondary Schools and Vocational Schools (see the portal of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport: [Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport](#))
- Higher Education Institutions
- Adult Education and Training Institutions

The list of higher education institutions and study programmes (including all accredited institutions and programmes as of 4 December 2020) is available on the [website](#) of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

- [University of Ljubljana](#) (*Univerza v Ljubljani*)
- [University of Maribor](#) (*Univerza v Mariboru*)
- [University of Primorska](#) - *Università del Litorale* (*Univerza na Primorskem*)
- [University of Nova Gorica](#) (*Univerza v Novi Gorici*)
- [University of Novo mesto](#) (*Univerza v Novem mestu*)
- [New University](#) (*Nova univerza*)

Adult education takes place in folk high schools. The list of adult education and training institutions is available at [the portal of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#). The list of folk high schools is available at [the website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#).

## Main concepts

In Slovenia, system of school libraries is inherent part of public education system. The system has reached following levels:

- all primary and secondary schools have a library;
- 479 elementary schools (more than 400 FTEs (full-time equivalent)) and 111 public secondary schools, including 15 independent student hostels, more than 120 FTEs librarians have been systemised;
- 175 full-time libraries have been included in the COBISS.SI system (library information system established in Slovenia), of which 88 elementary libraries, 77 secondary and high school libraries and 10 other school libraries. (COBISS statistics);
- according to the latest available data from 2012, all school libraries have approximately 8.5 million books and an annual purchase of about 440 000 units, and this includes labour costs and material costs of approximately 20 million Euros.

Music and dance education at the basic level is regulated with Music Schools Act ([Zakon o glasbenih šolah](#)) and is partly integrated in the primary education. The goals and tasks of education at the music school are:

- Discovering and developing musical and dance talents;
- Attaining appropriate knowledge and gaining experience to start engaging in amateur ensembles, orchestras, choirs and dance groups;
- Acquiring knowledge for further music and dance education, enabling artistic experience and expression;
- Facilitating the personal development of pupils in accordance with their abilities and development laws;
- Training for the common cultural and civilizational values that originate from the European tradition;
- Training for mutual tolerance, respect for difference and cooperation with others;
- Care for the transfer of national and multi-cultural heritage and the development of national consciousness and education for a multicultural society, while developing and preserving one's own cultural and natural heritage.

Pre-school children, elementary school pupils, secondary school students and adults, can enrol in all subjects under conditions (age of pupil, physical disposition, talent ...) determined by educational music and dance programmes. Enrolment in the first grade of the instrument, singing, ballet and contemporary dance is done on the basis of the received acceptance test, enrolment in the pre-school music school, and the music and dance internship is performed without acceptance test.

Performers of the programmes of the basic music and dance programme are public and private music schools, which are submitted in the record of performers at Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. In the school year 2015/16, 54 public music schools with 17 subsidiaries and 82 dislocated units and 13 private music schools operated in the Republic of Slovenia. In the regular part of the program, which is publicly funded, a total of 25,448 pupils were enrolled. After the completion of music school, talented musicians and dancers can continue their education at the secondary level – art gymnasium, direction music or dance.

## 6.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

Governing bodies:

- The [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#) is the main governmental authority for education and training.

- [Ministry of Family, Labour, Social affairs and Equal Opportunities](#) is responsible for the social status of pupils and their families and plays active and important role in the areas of vocational and adult education.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is directly responsible for the drafting, evaluation, analysis and implementation of regulations for all levels of education. The Ministry consists of numerous services, directorates and sectors covering specific areas, however, most relevant directorates in the field of education and training for young people (aged 18-24) are:

- The Upper Secondary, Short-cycle Higher Vocational and Adult Education Directorate ([Direktorat za srednje in višje šolstvo ter izobraževanje odraslih](#))
- The Education Development Office ([Urad za razvoj in kakovost izobraževanja](#))
- The [Higher Education Directorate](#) (Direktorat za visoko šolstvo).

#### Consulting bodies:

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport is comprised of consulting bodies. Following two are relevant regarding education and training:
  - The Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational and Technical Education ([Strokovni svet RS za poklicno in strokovno izobraževanje](#))
  - The National Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia ([Svet RS za visoko šolstvo](#)).

#### Quality assurance bodies:

Two national agencies are responsible for quality assurance, evaluation and assessment of education and training:

- The [National Examinations Centre](#) (Državni izpitni center) is a central institution for external assessment of pupils, apprentices, and adults in Slovenia.
- The [Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency](#) (Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije za kakovost v visokem šolstvu) provides for development and operation of a quality assurance system in higher education.

#### Representative bodies (trade unions):

Additionally, two representative trade unions play an active role in the field of education and training:

- The Education, Science and Culture Trade Union of Slovenia ([Sindikat vzgoje, izobraževanja, znanosti in kulture Slovenije](#)) is a representative trade union mainly for teachers and employees of public higher education institutions.
- The Higher Education Trade Union of Slovenia ([Visokošolski sindikat Slovenije](#)) primarily represents employees.

Universities are associated under the [Slovenian Rectors' Conference](#) (Rektorska konferenca RS), which is a body tasked with representing universities and protecting their interests.

Students also have their own representative body. The [Slovenian Student Union](#) (Študentska organizacija Slovenije) was established by the Student Association Act ([Zakon o skupnosti študentov](#)). SSU is an umbrella organization consisting of student organizations of the Universities of Ljubljana, Maribor, Primorska and the Student Clubs Association of Slovenia, which gathers 52 student clubs from around Slovenia (see [Chapter 5.3](#)).

For more details about the governance of the education and training system please visit [Eurydice](#).

## Cross-sectorial cooperation

Cross-sectorial cooperation is implemented within two councils. The Council of the Government for Student Affairs ([Svet Vlade Republike Slovenije za študentska vprašanja](#)) is an expert consultative body of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, which carries out expert tasks for it and provides assistance in decisions on topics related to students' issues. It consists of representatives from:

- [the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#),
- [the Ministry of Family, Labour, Social affairs and Equal Opportunities](#),
- [the Ministry of Culture](#),
- [the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food](#),
- [the Ministry of Health](#),
- [the Ministry of Finance](#),
- [the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning](#),
- [the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology](#),
- [the Ministry of Infrastructure](#),
- [the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth](#)
- and student organisations.

Another example of cross-sectorial cooperation is the project Traditional Slovene Breakfast ([Tradicionalni slovenski zajtrk](#)). The aim of this project is to educate, inform and raise awareness of schoolchildren and the general public about the importance of breakfast in the context of eating habits, the meaning and advantages of locally-grown foods of Slovene origin, the essential nature of agricultural activities and beekeeping for production, the environment, economic activities and the proper handling of waste from day-to-day activities and the rational management of packaging. The project also raises youth awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including the importance of moving and performing sports activities. The following institutions are involved in the project:

- [the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food](#),
- [the Ministry of Health](#),
- [the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#),
- [the Ministry of Culture](#),
- [the National Institute of Public Health](#),
- [the National Education Institute Slovenia](#)
- [and other non-public institutions](#).

Guidelines for healthy nutrition in educational institutions ([Smernice zdravega prehranjevanja v vzgojno-izobraževalnih ustanovah](#)) were developed together by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for Education, Science and Sport.

[Strategy](#) of development and use of skills in Slovenia is an example of cross-sectorial cooperation. Slovenia entered the project together with OECD and has committed to develop a national strategy for the development and use of skills, in line with the OECD methodology and framework. The project is coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and has coincided with the development of the national development strategy by 2050. It is expected that the prepared strategy should be one of its five pillars, which includes 'knowledge and skills'. The main goal of the joint project of the OECD and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia is the strategic evaluation of the national system of skills and the way in which skills in Slovenia are developed and used. The results



of the project will help Slovenia to develop effective strategies and policies in the field of skills in order to meet the future skills needs in Slovenia and to improve the match between supply and demand for skills at both the state, regional and local levels. The drafting of the strategy is based on the OECD methodology cross-sectorally and involves several different relevant stakeholders. In Slovenia, 8 ministries have joined the project. The results or recommended priority areas for Slovenia are as follows:

- Empowering the active population with appropriate skills for the future
- Establishing a lifelong learning culture
- Joint efforts to enhance skills

In December 2017, the strategy went into the second phase, the preparation of an action plan. In order to prepare an action plan, the Task Force, composed of representatives from the participating departments, focused on the country's skills system, which covers all levels of governance.

## 6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

### National strategy

To date, no specific national strategy or programme to prevent ELET has been adopted in Slovenia. In Slovenia, ELET is not detected as a problem since the percentage of early leavers from education and training (age group 18-24) is among the lowest in Europe.

### Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

Slovenia does not have any specific measure or policy on ELET. No recent policies and measures have been developed to tackle early leaving.

Each Slovenian school has an advisory service. In secondary schools, the counselling service consists of a psychologist and a social pedagogue. In addition, the primary incentive for young people to continue their educations is participation in social security programmes, as they gain some benefits (e.g., subsidized food, subsidized transport tickets etc.).

Slovenia has established a national target of decreasing the rate of early leavers to 5% by 2020 and has already exceeded the target in 2016, when the share of early leavers was 4.9%. In 2017, the share was 4.2% and in 2018, it lowered to 3.6%. It should be noted that in [Education and Training Monitor 2015 – Slovenia](#), it has been pointed out that the challenge “shifts to the early leavers [from tertiary education attainment] rate, which is estimated to be as high as 35%”.

Specific targeted measures for groups at risk focus on students and pupils who are socially disadvantaged, have migrant and minority/Roma backgrounds, or have special educational needs or special abilities (such as students receiving hospital treatments, gifted students, etc.). For detailed information, see the Thematic [report](#) and 6.6 Social inclusion through education and training.

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

As noted in the 2014 Eurydice [report](#), "*Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures*", Slovenia has wider definition(s) of early leavers. In fact, two national operational definitions are used:

- younger adults who did not successfully complete basic education (lower secondary),
- unemployed young adults between 15 and 25 years old who do not have any vocational qualification and are not enrolled in a school.

The first target group is eligible for the Basic School for Adults Programme ([Program osnovne šole za odrasle](#)); the second target group is eligible for the Learning for Young Adults Project ([Projektno učenje za mlajše odrasle – PUM-O](#)), which was renewed in 2016. It targets a wider array of groups within youth population, specifically, young people aged 15–26 who are unemployed, searching for first employment, who are not involved in any kind of VET, early leavers and high school students who are in formal education but are facing obstacles and could be leaving education early. The main aim of the programme PUM-O is to develop the potential of vulnerable young adults in order to provide them with better opportunities to enter education, develop a vocational identity, achieve success in the labour market and integrate socially success. The programme has not been evaluated yet, as it was implemented just one year ago, in May 2016. The programme is funded by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and co-funded by the European Social Fund. The 2016-2020 [budget](#) for the programme is 12 million euros (9.6 million of which come from European Social Fund).

### **Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions**

No new measures or actions have been put into effect since 2014. All the relevant information is available in the 2014 Eurydice [report](#) "Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures".

The Youth Guarantee scheme is an important part of youth policy. The Action Plan for National Youth Guarantee ([Jamstvo za mlade](#)) was renewed for the 2016-2020 period; measure number 6 is aimed at continued education being offered to young people under the age of 29 within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The purpose of the plan is to provide individual and group information and career counselling and tools for independent career management. The aim of the services is to identify a quality offer or measure that will most effectively assist the young unemployed person in their transition to the labour market or into employment.

The [Slovenian Institute for Adult Education](#) (Andragoški center RS) develops and evaluates the programmes for ELET. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities cooperate within this Institute. The methodology for monitoring and preventing early school leaving is presented in the document (in [Slovene](#)), which describes achieved goals of the action plan, effectiveness, changes needed and required changes of goals.

## **6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning**

### **Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning**

The Vocational and Technical Education Act ([Zakon o poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju](#)) is the legal basis for the recognition of informally acquired knowledge in secondary vocational education (see Article 71). Statutory instruments regulate recognition of higher vocational education.

The certification of non-formally acquired knowledge is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

In Slovenia, two legally-regulated channels or two fundamental purposes of recognizing non-formally and informally acquired knowledge were introduced:

- for [further integration into formal education](#) (continuation of interrupted education or continuation at a higher level, change in the direction of education, etc.) and
- [recognition of professional competence](#) (system of national vocational qualifications) in the labor market.

In the latter case, a valid certificate of a [national vocational qualification](#) (Nacionalna poklicna kvalifikacija [NPK]) can be obtained through the evaluation process.

National vocational qualifications can be acquired by young people who have become apprentices and have appropriate work experience or wish to progress in the careers without having to obtain a higher level of vocational education or complete a formal education programme.

The process of acquiring the [NPK](#) has 4 phases:

- Identification of the individual's skills and knowledge is carried out through counseling conducted by specially trained consultants. The counselor provides the candidate with information about the process of verification and validation of the NPK, helps in identifying non-formally and informally acquired knowledge and possibilities for the candidate's demonstration, advises on the appropriate qualification, and helps to create a portfolio (personal collection folder).
- Documentation of an individual's knowledge and skills is carried out by collecting evidence in a personal collection folder (see also the [National Reference Point for Occupational Qualifications Slovenia](#)).
- Evaluation in the NPK system is carried out in two phases: on the basis of the *validation of the evidence* in the personal collection folder and on the basis of a *direct examination of the candidate*.
- Recognition – in the recognition process, the candidate is officially recognized for the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal or informal learning, and a public document is issued: a certificate of a National Vocational Qualification.

Procedures for the validation of skills and competencies gained through non-formal and informal learning are based on the:

- [European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning \(CEDEFOP, 2015\)](#), see chapter 2,
- [Recommendation of the Council \(of the European Union\) on the validation of non-formal and informal learning](#) (Priporočilo Sveta o potrjevanju neformalnega in priložnostnega učenja).

Procedures for obtaining formal education qualifications on the basis of skills and competencies gained through non-formal and informal learning are arranged in respective acts, depending on the type of education in which the individual is enrolled. Detailed information is in the [European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014: country report Slovenia](#) under section 2.1 (the Post-secondary Education Act was amended in 2013; however, no changes were introduced regarding aspects of validation).

There is no national system for validation, and thus, skills audits are a matter of each institution or field. The same goes for the development of the professional competencies of staff involved in the validation processes. There is no single overarching policy to facilitate the comprehension (see section 2.4 in [European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014: country report Slovenia](#)).

There are two specific systems in place for the validation of competencies acquired through non-formal learning. Students have an option to validate acquired competencies based on the Rules on the Recognition of the Previous Education in Higher Vocational Education, which were drafted on the basis of The Recognition and Evaluation of Education Act ([Zakon o vrednotenju in priznavanju izobraževanja](#)). The rules differ among faculties. The system for validation of competencies for pupils is based on the Vocational Education Act ([Zakon o poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju](#)) and prescribed in the Rules on the Assessment of Knowledge in the Vocational and Secondary Technical Education ([Pravilnik o ocenjevanju znanja v poklicnem in srednjem strokovnem izobraževanju](#)). Other schools on the secondary level have to develop their own rules for validation.

## Information and guidance

The project "Professional Support to Informative Advisory Activities and Evaluation of Informally-Accomplished Knowledge 2016-2021" ([Strokovna podpora informativno svetovalni dejavnosti in vrednotenju neformalno pridobljenega znanja 2016–2021](#)) was created as a continuation of activities in the field of information and counselling and the identification and evaluation of previously acquired knowledge in the past ESS programme timeframe. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education is coordinating the project.

The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training conducts activities that promote and increase the visibility of the system among users: companies and candidates ([Nacionalne poklicne kvalifikacije](#)). Through promotional activities, they provide the information about the system to the general public and offer the website: [National Vocational Qualifications](#), which provides basic information on the certification system and examples of good practices in the use of the certificate system. They also distribute promotional materials to the units of the Employment Service of Slovenia, the Information and Career Advisory Centre, the adult education centres, the centres for lifelong learning, the Association of Employers of Slovenia and others. Promotional materials are also reasonably distributed to ministries, trade unions and chambers of commerce.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport established the website "Evaluation and recognition of non-formal learning" ([Vrednotenje in priznavanje neformalnega znanja](#)) with cooperation of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. The aim is to instruct and facilitate the process for individuals seeking evaluation and validation of their non-formal and informal education. The focus is on adults, but the website has value for all demographic groups, including youth.

Another similar information source on validation is offered by the [Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training](#) (Center za poklicno izobraževanje) in the form of a website explaining their services and duties.

With specific respect to young people, a measure called "Activation of young people in the labour market" ([Aktivacija mladih na trgu dela](#)) was put in action, which is part of the Youth Guarantee scheme. Sub-section number 10 is comprised of measures specifically aimed at promotion of non-formal and informal learning (see also Chapter 3.6: Youth Employment Measures).

- Informal education and training for youth,
- On-the-job training – youth,
- PUM-o; Project learning for young adults,
- Support for new career prospects,
- Obtaining additional knowledge for young people in the field of cultural activities within the framework of the public fund for cultural activities (JSKD),
- Workplace trainings "I can, because I know".

Institute Nefiks is the most prominent actor in the field of recognition of non-formal acquired knowledge and skills. Nefiks is a non-governmental organization that is working on promotion and recognition of knowledge and competence acquired through non-formal education and informal learning. The main project of the Nefiks is booklet with its online version that has been designed to help individuals and organizations with recording knowledge, skills and competences developed through different activities like volunteer work, workshops, language courses and other activities where learning took place. The index was created according to the Scandinavian model and was adapted and implemented on the basis of the analysis and experiences of the creators in the Slovenian youth space. At the national level, there is still no comparable tool that could present both informally acquired knowledge of the individual both comprehensively and partially. Their aim is to include, recognize and consider youth and volunteer work in the formal education system,

scholarship schemes and employment. For this reasons different promotional and educational events are organized, they also prepare publications and cooperate with stakeholders on local, national and international level.

## Quality assurance

Quality assurance in the [NPK](#) system:

- In the process of acquiring the NPK, the candidate proves his/her qualification and knowledge for the effective performance of certain professional competencies (with regard to a particular professional standard and a catalog of standards of professional skills);
- The procedure for verification and validation of NPKs is carried out by the contractors, which are in the register of the [National Examination Centre](#) (Državni izpitni centre – RIC);
- Verification and validation of the NPK takes place in front of a three-member commission appointed by the RIC. The members of the verification and certification committees are experts in their field of work, which is proved by the required knowledge, education and work experience.
- In the framework of the system of obtaining National Vocational Qualifications, a process has been developed that includes four phases of recognition of non-formal and informal knowledge and is set out in the Rules on the method and procedure for the validation of national professional qualifications ([Pravilnik o načinu in postopku preverjanja in potrjevanja nacionalnih poklicnih kvalifikacij](#)). This ensures uniformity, transparency and quality of certificates for NPK.
- The candidate has the right to object the decision of the commission.
- The Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia in charge of labour is supervising the legality of procedures.
- The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training is designated by the law to monitor the NPK system and monitor the work of consellers.
- National Examination Centre is designated by the law to monitor the work of the verification and certification commissions, and at the same time to ensure the quality, transparency and objectivity of the examination of knowledge.

Each educational level has its own quality assurance framework for institutional and programme evaluation and accreditation. Recognition and validation of non-formal education is a part of these frameworks. A system of quality assessment and assurance exists for each level of education. State-budgeted bodies (councils, agencies) are autonomous from the government and perform quality assessment.

The bodies responsible for quality assessment and assurance in cooperation with stakeholders prepare measures for quality assurance for each educational level and develop tools for evaluation and accreditation. Quality assurance is regulated by the acts for the respective fields of education and, more specifically, by national measures and regulations. These documents are based on international examples, EC guidance and international standards (see [report](#)).

Measures and regulations for validation are checked and so is the quality of the procedure of validation and recognition, required evidence and the body responsible for validation (type of committee, how members are chosen and appointed, how often they meet, how they work and cooperate, how validation processes are performed).

The quality assurance checking process ends with an opinion from respective body and recommendations. If quality does not meet minimal standards, public validity can be cancelled, and subsequently public funding is withheld.

Further detailed information on validation of informal learning can be found in the [European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014: country report Slovenia](#), section 4 and subsequent sub-sections.

## 6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

### Policy framework

One of the objectives of the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) is to increase the international mobility of young people in Slovenia. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport wants to stimulate the Slovenian students towards mobility. Thus, the ministry has been implementing the project "Mobility of students from socially weaker environments" since 2016 (see the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022). This programme co-finances additional monthly allowances for students from socially-disadvantaged backgrounds through the funds from the European Social Fund and through the Erasmus programme. In the academic year 2016/17, funds incentivizing students from socially weaker environments were available in the amount of the monthly allowance of 270 EUR. This was paid to the student entirely before leaving for international mobility. In 2016, the incentive for the socially weak was paid out to 432 beneficiary students in higher education. In 2017, the monthly allowance of 250 EUR was paid out to 515 beneficiary students in higher education. In 2018, the monthly allowance of 200-220 EUR was paid out to 541 beneficiary students and in 2019, the monthly allowance of 200 EUR was paid out to 672 beneficiary students.

Basic orientations of international co-operation in education are laid out in the White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia ([Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji](#)). This conceptual guideline underlies all substantive changes in the country's education system in recent years and is largely based on European dimensions, such as the common European heritage of political, cultural and moral values reflected in human rights, the rule of law, pluralistic democracy, tolerance, solidarity and intercultural education.

The legislation on education also defines basic aspects of the international dimension.

The Organisation and Financing of Education Act ([Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja](#)) states that enabling participation in European integration processes is one of the basic goals of the Slovene education system and one of the priorities of its further development (see Article 2).

The internationalization of higher education was one of the priorities of the Resolution on National programme of higher education for the 2011-2020 time period ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu visokega šolstva 2011-2020](#)). Subsection 2.6 claims internationalization is of crucial importance for further development of higher education area. The new Resolution on National programme of higher education 2021-2030 is still under preparation. The internationalization of higher education remains one of the priorities of the new programme proposal.

As noted in the Mobility Scoreboard, sub-section 1.1.5, [Actions for improving the Provision of Information and Guidance on International Learning Mobility for IVET Learners](#), Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) youth mobility is a priority area, with a focus on strengthening the quality, promotion and support for studies and practical training abroad.

Moreover, we should note there is also an overarching strategy to promote mobility at tertiary level (Strategy of Internationalisation of Higher Education; [Strategija internacionalizacije slovenskega visokega šolstva 2016-2020](#)). The strategy emphasizes the importance of developing global relations with the world, especially with Slovenia being a small country. Strategies also aim at establishing Slovenia as an international centre

of knowledge. The strategy is backed up by the action plan for 2016-2018 ([Akcijski načrt 2016-2018](#)) and Action plan for 2018-2020 ([Akcijski načrt 2018-2020](#)).

Non-governmental actor, the National Youth Council of Slovenia adopted the Programme document for the mobility of young people ([Policy paper on Youth Mobility](#)).

## **Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education**

Mobility of pupils in Slovenia is mainly enabled within the framework of the EU [Programme Erasmus+](#). This is coordinated and performed by the national agency [The Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes \(CMEPIUS\)](#). The framework of the programme coordinates pupils and students in a variety of sub-programme activity. These include the Comenius and Leonardo da Vinci initiatives. The EU [Programme Erasmus+](#) offers financially support for non-formal learning and mobility of young people (from 13 to 30 years) which contributes to the goals of European cooperation in the area of the young. The national agency [Institute for the Development of Youth Mobility \(MOVIT\)](#) implements the Programme in Slovenia.

Slovenia is a founding member of the [CEEPUS](#) programme – Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies. The fundamental principles of the CEEPUS exchange programme and its contents are similar to the European Community programme. The programme enables equal partnerships between members and their university networks, and scholarships contribute to the EU's objective of increasing mobility.

Bilateral cooperation between Slovenia and European and non-European countries is defined in bilateral agreements, programmes and protocols on cooperation in education, science and culture.

Four programmes are available for young people to consider when pursuing cross-border mobility in formal education:

- Co-shaping the European Higher Education Area (aims to finance CEEPUS and bilateral agreement exchanges; supports mobility of Higher Education staff and students),
- Public tender for financing mobility of students from socially weaker backgrounds ([Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport](#)),
- Ad Futura programmes for international mobility ([Štipendije Ad Futura za izobraževanje](#)),
- Learning Network on Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults (TLN Mobility).

For all the above programmes, approximately a budget of 5.4 million euros is [provided](#).

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

In the context of non-formal learning, there are no incentives or actions by top level authorities to support cross-border mobility. However, in the field of youth work, Action Plan of a Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 for 2016/2017 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2016 in 2017](#)), 2018/2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2018 in 2019](#)) and 2020/2021 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2020 in 2021](#)) has this specific aim in the field: *Promoting inclusion in international youth work and learning mobility in youth work and strengthening them*. Two measures are provided in order to reach this goal: Erasmus+ Key Action 1 (Mobility projects for young people and youth workers) and Erasmus+ Key Action 2 (Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices). The Erasmus+ programme finances both measures.

## Quality assurance

The Programme Erasmus+ has quality assurance built into the application process and other activities carried out during the implementation of projects (e.g. relevance of the project, quality of project design, impact and dissemination). There is no other quality assurance system.

## 6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

### Educational support

In Slovenia, social inclusion is provided through the entire educational and training vertical – from kindergarten to higher education.

Concerning the inclusion of young people we should note that new educational programmes are adopted every year. The adoption of publicly valid educational programmes is defined in Articles 15 and 17 of the Organization and Financing of Education Act ([Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja](#)).

Other relevant guidelines include:

- Instruction for the educational programmes with tailored implementation and additional professional aid for gymnasium programmes ([Navodila za izobraževalni program s prilagojenim izvajanjem in dodatno strokovno pomočjo za gimnazijski program](#)),
- Instruction for the implementation of vocational programmes and upper secondary education with tailored implementation and additional professional aid ([Navodila za izvajanje izobraževalnih programov poklicnega in strokovnega izobraževanja s prilagojenim izvajanjem in dodatno strokovno pomočjo](#)), and
- Programme guidelines for programmes of high school education: counselling service in secondary schools ([Programske smernice. Svetovalna služba v gimnazijah, nižjih in srednjih poklicnih šolah ter strokovnih šolah in v dijaških domovih](#)).

Additional support (see Eurydice report in [Slovene](#)) can be delivered in the form of extra hours of assistance to overcome deficiencies, barriers and/or disorders, or in the form of learning assistance to facilitate learning for a specific subject. A permanent or temporary assistant can be assigned to pupils or students with severe physical impairments to assist them during lessons or with other activities during school time. Target groups are adapted with regard to the level of education. Additionally, if necessary, appropriate measures are introduced based on the needs of specific target group. In the high school education (upper secondary schools, vocational schools, gymnasiums) there are the following target groups (hyperlinks provide further information on specific measurement and policies in the context of formal education):

- 2.1 Members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities: right to education in their mother tongue and provision of education in ethnically mixed areas.
- 2.2 Members of the Roma community: specified as a special group with special rights defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. The exercise of special rights is specified by the Roma Community Act ([Zakon o romski skupnosti v RS](#)).
- 2.3 Migrants (foreign nationals): strategies, adjustments and methods of cooperation and integration of migrant children and their parents in view of assisting kindergartens and schools in planning education work with alien children ([Smernice za izobraževanje otrok tujcev v vrtcih in šolah](#)).
- 2.4 Talented pupils or students: the provision of instruction to talented children or pupils may be adapted to their needs.
- 2.5 Pupils or students with learning problems: the right to have adapted methodology.
- 2.6 Children in hospital care: specific for pre-school and basic school education.



- 2.7 Children from less favourable social and economic environments: may receive support and assistance.

The target groups ([vrste statusov](#)) in Higher Education are:

- students with special needs,
- top athletes,
- students preparing for international competitions in a particular subject,
- students who become parents,
- renowned artist.

Higher vocational colleges and higher education institutions are autonomous in their approach to students with special needs. They may adapt individual activities to the needs of SEN students and, thereby, provide equal opportunities. In the selection procedure for enrolment in undergraduate studies, candidates may receive special needs status. Institutions may customize study obligations also for top student athletes, students in training for international contests of knowledge, as well as gifted students. Student mothers who give birth during their studies are entitled to an extension of their student status by one year for each live born child.

Regarding social inclusion in Life-Long Learning programmes, dropouts and early leavers from education and training are also included as eligible applicants in the Adult Education Plan for 2020 ([Letni program izobraževanja odraslih RS za leto 2020](#)).

There are no specific programmes or initiatives aiming at helping young people overcome obstacles in participation in non-formal and informal education. However, the national agency of Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme recognized the importance of participation in projects of non-formal learning. Participants improve their competencies, self-esteem and opportunities for employment. Furthermore, it is an important factor in finding motivation for further development or becoming active in other ways, therefore reaching the aim of inclusion in society. This is important for vulnerable groups of young people, to whom the programme pays special attention. The National agency has therefore set social inclusion as one of the four priorities until 2020. To this end, the series of events were held under the slogan "Key to inclusion" ([Ključ do vključenosti](#)), aimed at increasing the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

## Social cohesion and equal opportunities

Slovenia implements several different measurements and approaches, depending on the needs and difficulties of respective group. However, according to the *Gender Differences in Educational Outcomes: Study on the Measures Taken and the Current Situation in Europe* (2010), addressing gender issues is not an explicit aim of the curriculum in Slovenia. Policy measures target both the improvement of the position of women in science and work-life balance. While addressing of gender issues is not the aim of curriculum, the opposite applies to the topic of discrimination. Further detailed information can be found in [Citizenship Education in Europe; Eurydice Report \(2012\)](#). Slovenia has also joined the Paris Declaration, called the "Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education". According to follow-up report ([Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education: Overview of education policy developments in Europe following the Paris Declaration of 17 March 2015](#)), Slovenia has not adopted any new education policy. Additionally, "policies contributing to the objectives of the Paris Declaration to various degrees are in place in all countries; and some countries have introduced important measures in the years just before the adoption of the Declaration".

A partnership agreement between Slovenia and the European Commission on implementation of cohesion policy was adopted in October 2014 for the 2014-2020 period. Among other, general horizontal principles are defined, such as partnership, promotion of gender equality, fight against discrimination and accessibility, and sustainable

development. To this end, Priority axis 9: Promotion of Social Inclusion and fight against poverty and any kind of discrimination ([Prednostna os 9: Spodbujanje socialnega vključevanja ter boj proti revščini in kakršnikoli diskriminaciji](#)) have been put into action. The total assets amount to approximately 6.5 million euros.

To tackle violence, guidelines for analysis, prevention and dealing with/handling of violence in educational space (*Smernice za analizo, preprečevanje in obravnavo/obvladovanje nasilja v šolskem prostoru, 2004*) were introduced in 2004. The guidelines cover practical cases, international comparison, suggested measures and principles of dealing with and handling of violence.

In years 2009, 2010 and 2011, the project School of Equal Opportunities ([Šola enakih možnosti](#)) was prepared, designed and implemented. The aim of the project was successful integration of children and youth with special needs into the education system. The purpose was to develop the implementation curricula, forms and modes of education that will be adapted for children with special needs, not only at the primary level but also in secondary schools. The project started on September 1, 2009 and ended on March 31, 2013.

There is also a framework document "Guidelines for the inclusion of immigrant children in kindergartens and schools" ([Smernice za vključevanje otrok priseljencev v vrtce in šole](#)), adopted in 2012, with the purpose of helping with the general orientations for work and successful integration of immigrant pupils in the planning of educational work.

## 6.7 Skills for innovation

### Innovation in formal education

In December 2017, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted Slovenia's Development Strategy 2030 ([Strategija razvoja Slovenije 2030](#)). This document defined the vision and objectives of Slovenia's development through 2030. The document lists 12 development goals, among which the 2<sup>nd</sup> one refers to "knowledge and skills for quality life and work". The goal wants to promote and enable obtaining knowledge through quality and accessibility of offers and wants to target the broadest population of different age groups, particularly concerning disadvantaged groups.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Office for Development and Quality of Education ([Urad za razvoj in kakovost izobraževanja](#)) is responsible for the development of education. Among other things, office performs various developmental tasks and develops a series of important areas of education for the present and future. In particular, the activities are focused on the following areas:

- Innovative learning environments
- Literacy
- ICT in education
- Entrepreneurship in education
- Human rights and education for democracy
- Prevention of violence
- Language training
- Cultural-art education
- Renovation of gymnasium programmes
- Sustainable Development
- Photocopying and respect for copyright in school
- Leadership in education

- Development of counseling in the field of adult education
- Gifted in education
- Equal opportunities

Entrepreneurship education ([Podjetništvo](#)) is explicitly recognized as a cross-curricular objective and as part of other compulsory and optional subjects. For ISCED 3, an update of the teaching subject curricula was launched in 2007. The update included the adoption of guidelines and the inclusion of a competence approach. Implementation started in 2008/09. For ISCED 3, entrepreneurship education is also part of compulsory subjects (Geography, IT and Social Sciences) and the optional subject of economics. In schools with a branch of economics, this subject is compulsory. In schools with a studies in technical engineering, the separate subject of entrepreneurship is compulsory. For ISCED 1-3, entrepreneurship is in one of the eight key competencies in curricular documents. Curricula for different subjects (such as social studies, natural science, technology, home economics) include some learning outcomes linked to developing entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. These include those in areas linked to the economy, world of work, economic rights and sustainable development. Specific learning outcomes for entrepreneurship education are included in the learning outcomes of the subjects in which it is embedded. Example for ISCED 3:

- students gain the basic skills of entrepreneurial behavior (planning, organizing, analyzing, communicating, giving directions, managing tasks, evaluation, etc.).
- students develop the ability to work in the group, to take responsibility, to evaluate and take risks and initiatives.
- students proactively plan the process of solving the chosen problem, search the information and evaluate the quality of the proposed solutions.
- students explain the changing field of work, employment and economy in modern societies and assess its consequences for the society, the life of individuals.
- students investigate the relationship of work and leisure for different social groups and the importance of social organizations in modern societies.

Several continuing professional development courses have been developed by [the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training \(CPI\)](#) and the [Agency for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Foreign investment and Technology](#) within projects, and by the Junior Achievement Slovenia for teachers from primary to secondary education, including school-based IVET. The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training provides some materials and guidelines ([smernice](#)), which were developed within the scope of different projects and can help teachers of entrepreneurship education at upper secondary level (general and school-based IVET). Slovenia is still involved in projects aimed at developing teaching methods and materials.

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

Governmental fostering of innovation and entrepreneurship is implemented through programmes of the [Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Foreign Investments and Technology – SPIRIT Slovenia](#), which are part of the [Ministry of Economic Development and Technology](#) (Ministrstvo za gospodarski razvoj in tehnologijo). This public agency organizes programmes and workshops for young people (aged 15–29) under the trademark 'It's "happening" to youth' ([Mladim se dogaja](#)) such as:

- Challenges for Young people ([Izzivi mladim](#)),
- Workshops in the field of promotion of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship ([Krožki s področja spodbujanja ustvarjalnosti, inovativnosti in podjetnosti](#)),
- Short tasks 'Entrepreneurship Intersection' ([Stičišče podjetnosti](#)),

- Cooperation with young people from Basic and Upper Secondary Schools ([Sodelovanje mladih z osnovnih in srednjih šol](#)), etc.

The agency also hosts professional development trainings for educators and teachers ([Usposabljanje pedagogov](#)).

In the financial plan ([Spremembe programa dela in FN 2017](#)) of the public agency, a proposed budget of 575,000 is proposed for Education and training with an additional 200,000 euros for stimulating young people.

## 6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

### National strategy

Slovenia has no coherent document or strategy for youth in the field of media literacy and safe use of new media. In the initial strategy for media development up to 2024 ([Strategija razvoja medijev v Republiki Sloveniji do leta 2024](#)), there is a topic 'Media literacy and provision' stating that 'media and digital literacy are part of compulsory curriculum in basic school'. The initial strategy was a predecessor of the draft media strategy for 2017-2025 ([Osnutek strategije na področju medijev za obdobje 2017 – 2025](#)). A time frame for implementation has yet to be adopted. The strategy does not mention new media in any way. The strategy foresees the following measures:

- analysis of the situation of media literacy,
- introduction of the programmes media literacy or integration of media content literacy in other school subjects. Media literacy in connection with digital literacy is shaped as an essential learning content, possibly as part of another compulsory subject (e.g., civic education) instead of as an optional subject and
- ongoing monitoring of the media literacy situation with research every other year.

The indicators are:

- Comparison of the analysis of the state of media literacy from 2017 with the past analyses,
- the level of integration of content from the field of media literacy into school programmes and
- the extent of adult involvement in media literacy programmes.

Stakeholders are the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, folk universities and media companies.

No indicators for assessment of the strategy exist.

The strategy 'Digital Slovenia - Information Society Development Strategy until 2020' ([Digitalna Slovenija - Strategija razvoja informacijske družbe do leta 2020](#)) addresses media literacy, yet not exclusively in the context of youth. It mentions youth in a context of a following measure:

- guiding youth to choose ICT professions and connect youth with the private sector and its needs and trainings for new digital jobs.

[According to](#) the Ministry of Ministry of Public Administration, the new strategy 'Digital Slovenia 2030' is under preparation. One of the priority areas of the new strategy will be digital inclusion.

### Media literacy and online safety through formal education

In Slovenia, the provision of media education is currently limited to basic schools, where pupils have the opportunity to choose a separate subject of media education ([Vzgoja za medije](#)). Simultaneously, media education is included in other subjects in basic schools. Critical media education is most intensely present in the Slovene language ([Slovenščina](#)),

while media education is actively pursued in the subject of Homeland and civic education and ethics ([Domovinska in državljanska vzgoja ter etika](#)). They address the topics of print media, radio, television etc.

In high school education, sociology ([Sociologija](#)) is an exception, as there is special learning topic regarding mass media and communication. In higher education, there are specific study programmes held at the Faculty of Social Sciences, named Communication Studies: Media and Communication Studies ([Katedra za medijske in komunikacijske študije](#)).

All major projects are in accordance with all the relevant activities of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. Online communities are established within the Slovenian educational network. The ministry funds the programme known as Safe Online ([Varni na internetu](#)) through Arnes ([Academic and research network Slovenia](#)). The programme is intended mainly for adult users and smaller companies, but it also involves meetings for basic school headmasters with wider context of information on security and online abuse. The Slovenian Centre for Mediation in Network Incidents ([SI-CERT](#)), which operates under the auspices of the Arnes, is a national focal point of a public awareness campaign on information security. The project was financed entirely by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport's Directorate for Information Society. The Directorate was later moved under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Administration.

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

Under the banner of [SAFE.SI](#), established in 2005, a national programme to raise awareness among children and teenagers on the safe use of the Internet and mobile devices. Activities target four groups:

1. children,
2. adolescents,
3. parents and
4. professional workers (teachers, social workers, youth workers).

SAFE.SI is operated by the [Safer Internet Centre Slovenia](#), the national project promoting and ensuring a better internet for kids. The project is co-financed by the European Union's Connecting Europe Facility, in Slovenia financial support also comes from the Ministry of Public Administration. The project is run by a consortium of partners coordinated by Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ljubljana, Academic and Research Network of Slovenia (Arnes), Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth (ZPMS) and Youth Information and Counselling Center of Slovenia (MISSS).

### **Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media**

The project Safer Internet Centre ([Center za varnejši internet](#)) is implemented by the:

- University of Ljubljana (Faculty of Social Sciences),
- Arnes,
- Association of Friends of Youth of Slovenia and
- MISSS Institute (Youth Information Advisory Center of Slovenia).

It is financed by the [INEA Agency](#) at the European Commission (through the Connecting Europe instrument) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

The Safer Internet Centre offers three main services:

- [Awareness about the safe use of the Internet and new technologies](#) aimed at children, teenagers, parents, teachers and social workers through various online and offline activities, trainings, workshops, materials, promotional campaigns and media campaigns on how to safely and responsibly use the internet and mobile devices.

- [Advice Line for Online Problems – Tom Phone 166 111](#). Consultants answer questions, resolve dilemmas and solve problems related to using the Internet between 12 am and 8 pm each day. As of February 2013, the TOM chat room ([TOM telefon za otroke in mladostnike](#)) started to function, where children, adolescents and their parents can receive advice and help through online chat.
- [Anonymous online reporting of illegal online content](#). This includes videos of child sexual abuse (child pornography) and hate speech. If a person encounters such content on the Internet, he/she can report it on the Web Eye ([Spletno oko](#)). Similar programmes throughout Europe have proven to be an effective measure in the fight to reduce illegal content on the Internet.

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

### Information providers / counselling structures

[The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth](#) develops suitable mechanisms for supporting youth organisations and organizations for youth, which are of key importance for promoting active youth participation. Every year, the Office for Youth issues a public call for co-financing the programmes of youth organisations and organisations for youth, which are all eligible for co-financing. In 2021, according to the results of public tender for co-funding programmes of youth work in 2020 and 2021 (Review and evaluation of applications under the implementation of the Public Call for Co-financing of Youth Work Programs in 2020 and 2021; [Pregled in vrednotenje prijav v okviru izvedbe Javnega poziva za sofinanciranje programov mladinskega dela v letih 2020 in 2021](#)), there were:

- 13 national youth organisations,
- 70 youth centres and
- 38 other non-governmental organisations.

[The Employment Service of Slovenia](#) is also one of the main actors carrying out non-formal education for young people, and it provides valuable information regarding specific local programmes of non-formal education. As part of the programme, job seekers can take part in various training and training sessions for the jobs and tasks that employers ask for. They can gain additional knowledge and skills that they can apply in a specific job, and increase their job prospects.

Web portal [mlad.si](#) is intended for all young people in the Republic of Slovenia and for youth workers. All the necessary information about youth can be found on the portal, including all the opportunities that are offered to young people outside the education process and the first work experience. The portal connects in substance the three main entry points and sections, meaningfully forming the life cycle of young people, their needs and the desire to actively spend their free time and meet the challenges of the age between 15 and 29.

[Dostop.si](#) is also a web portal, established by Student Union of University of Maribor, primarily more focused on student population, however, contains all the relevant information for general youth, including event calendar, columns, tips and advice.

[Talentiran.si](#), web portal by Nefiks Institute, the leading system of recording non-formal acquired knowledge in Slovenia, which allows young people to systematically collect all non-formal acquired and certified competences in one place. The portal offers relevant news and upcoming events, where young people and youth workers can participate.

### Awareness raising initiatives

According to the Action Plan for National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 for 2020–2021 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2020](#)

[in 2021](#)), the measure named 'non-formal education and training for youth' aims to contribute to the sustainable inclusion of young people in the labour market. To this end, it promotes varied programmes of non-formal learning and training. The measure also aims to raise awareness, such as promoting the importance of training and acquired knowledge during non-formal education. The Employment Service of Slovenia ([Zavod Republike Slovenije za zaposlovanje](#)) carries out the measure. The Office for Youth also promotes non-formal learning processes to increase competencies among youth transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

## 6.10 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

At the end of 2019, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the National Strategy for the Development of Reading Literacy for the period 2019-2030 ([Nacionalna strategija za razvoj bralne pismenosti za obdobje 2019-2030](#)). The Strategy defines the area of literacy, which is the basis for all other literacies, including information and media literacy, where both the ability to acquire and critically process information are important. The Ministry is developing media literacy, which is linked to the internet, in the context of the digitisation of education (from teacher training, teaching materials and didactic aids, safe use, to development and research projects).

### Ongoing debates

The strategy 'Digital Slovenia 2030' is under preparation. Although the detailed content of the strategy has not yet been publicly presented, the new strategy is expected to focus, among other things, on digital inclusion.

## 7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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Every year all primary and secondary schools and also the university student population in Slovenia participate in [SLOfit](#). SLOfit is a national surveillance system for physical and motor development of children and youth. In school year 2015/2016, a resurgence of excessive nutrition and the consequent decline in the childhood and youth physical performance was shown. Compared to other EU countries, there is a growing trend of increasing obesity in Slovenia. As many as a fifth of girls and a quarter of boys have a body weight higher than recommended. Therefore, the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) foresees as an objective "Promoting regular physical activity, balanced nutrition and maintenance of the recommended body weight among young people".

Main governmental authorities responsible for youth health are the Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Public Health.

There are several national strategies and programmes addressing sport, youth fitness and physical activity:

1. [The National Programme of Sports of the Republic of Slovenia 2014–2023](#) ([Nacionalni program športa v Republiki Sloveniji 2014–2023](#)) provides general framework for promotion and support of sport and physical activity
2. [The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022](#) ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#))
3. [The National Programme for Nutrition and Health Enhancing Physical Activity \(HEPA\) 2015–2025](#) ([Nacionalni program o prehrani in telesni dejavnosti za zdravje 2015–2025](#))
4. [Resolution on National programme of Mental Health 2018–2028](#) ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018–2028](#)).

5. [The Strategy for the Health of Children and Youth in Connection with the Environment \(2012–2020\) \(Strategija za zdravje otrok in mladostnikov v povezavi z okoljem 2012–2020\)](#).

At the upper secondary level, the health education and healthy lifestyles lessons are held as part of compulsory optional content ([obvezne izbirne vsebine](#)).

## 7.1 General context

### Main trends in the health conditions of young people

[SLOfit](#) is a national surveillance system for the physical and motor development of children and youth that was formerly known as Sports Educational Chart. The system was implemented in 1982 with a sample of Slovenian schools, and after five years of testing, it was introduced to all Slovenian primary and secondary schools. Every year, all primary and secondary schools and the university student population in Slovenia participate in SLOfit.

After almost ten years of accelerated decline in movement capacity, a 2015/16 report found that, in the prior five years, children and youth had either stagnated or progressed, depending on age group and sex. In school year 2015/2016, a resurgence of excessive nutrition and a consequent decline in childhood and youth physical performance occurred. The study also found a deterioration in pupils' abilities; a slightly lesser decrease was found among female pupils and students. An increase in body-mass among female pupils and students was fortunately due not only to the increase in fat content. It is worrisome that the study observed once again an increased the share of less physically competent pupils and secondary school students, and in parallel, a reduced share of those who are physically talented.

According to the National Institute of Public Health ([Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje](#)), in 1993 13.7% of children and adolescents were overweight in Slovenia, and 3.1% of children and adolescents were obese. By 2010, these figures had risen to 19.6% overweight and 7.3% obese children and adolescents. After 2010, Slovenia witnessed a halt in the rise in childhood obesity, and in 2015, 18.2% were overweight and 6.6% were obese. Data from various studies show that Slovenia was more successful with youths than with the elderly, more successful with boys than with girls and more successful in Western and Central Slovenia than in Eastern Slovenia. A number of measures that are already being introduced or are under preparation will target the reduction of obesity in more vulnerable groups of children and adolescents.

As many as one-fifth of girls and one-quarter of boys have a body weight higher than recommended. Therefore, the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) has the objective of 'promoting regular physical activity, balanced nutrition and maintenance of the recommended body weight among young people'.

The national youth organisation No Excuse Slovenia ([Mladinska zveza Brez izgovora Slovenija](#)) has summarised the report of the National Institute of Public Health showing that the latest data on adolescents aged 11, 13 and 15 are encouraging, as the prevalence of smoking among these age groups significantly decreased between 2010 and 2014. According to data from 2014, every seventh 15-year-old youth smokes at least once a week, and every sixth smokes for the first time by age 13 or younger.

In the spirit of World Suicide Prevention Day, the National Institute of Public Health disclosed the latest information and data on suicide rates in Slovenia. RTV Slovenia ([RTV Slovenija](#)) says that the trends among young people remain unchanged. While the number of suicides has generally decreased, statistics show no significant change in suicide numbers among young people. About 20 young people annually commit suicide, a trend that has existed for quite some time. Among youth, there are many more so-called self-inflicted injuries, since young people often express their distress by cutting or otherwise



harming themselves. There are also large differences between the sexes. Thus, girls often think about suicidal behaviour, but the number of deaths resulting from suicide is much higher among the young male population.

According to a diploma paper from 2016, 'Suicide among young people in Slovenia' ([Samomorilnost med mladimi v Sloveniji](#)), Slovenia has been among countries with higher suicide rates for years, which is also shown in EU data from 2010. With a suicide rate of 18.4 per 100,000 inhabitants, Slovenia is ranked fourth among EU member states. In Slovenia, suicide among young people under the age of 25 is one of the three main causes of death of young people. Suicide is the most commonly recorded cause of death among adolescents aged between age 14 and 19. In 2009, the National Institute of Public Health published a report on suicides among Slovenian youth ([Spregovorimo o samomoru med mladimi](#)). The study found that every year in Slovenia, 20 young people commit suicide, which places Slovenia slightly above the European average. Among youth suicides, the number of boys is almost four times the number of girls. The authors classify causes for suicides into three groups: individual causes (such as mental disorders, personality traits, drug or alcohol abuse etc.), family causes (such as loss of a parent, abuse etc.) and environmental causes (such as influence of media, peers, internet etc.).

See earlier data on youth health and trends below.

The [Youth 2010](#) (Mladina 2010), comprehensive research and survey of young Slovenian people showed that demographic trends were not positive, as from 2010 to 2020 the number of young people in Slovenia (15–29 years) was expected to be reduced by more than 20%. Regarding trends in health and well-being, the researchers pointed out following seven trends among young people in Slovenia:

1. Over the course of the 15 years prior to 2010 (when the research was conducted), the number of traffic accidents and suicides decreased as the most common causes of mortality among young people (they are still the most common ones but the numbers have gone down).
2. The satisfaction of young people with their lives and health is comparable with other age groups. Compared with other European countries, Slovenian youth are relatively satisfied with life in general. Four-fifths of Slovenian youth are satisfied or very satisfied with their health.
3. More than two-thirds of young people have a normal weight. However, compared with research conducted in 2000, the share of overweight or obese people is increasing. Males and people in rural areas make up larger numbers of overweight or obese young people.
4. The use of tobacco and tobacco products among young people is slightly declining, but more young people have had experiences using alcohol and illicit drugs. The consumption of tobacco and alcohol among men in the 'student' age group and in the urban environment has grown more frequent. Experiences with illicit drugs are more typical among men in urban environments.
5. In summary, in all the findings of the analysis of Slovenian youth's state of health (excluding subjective assessments on satisfaction with life, health and body image), males are expected to be the most differentiated risk group.
6. The age group of young people between 19–24 years, so-called students or youth, is particularly vulnerable to the most common causes of death among young people (traffic accidents and suicides) and risky health behaviour.
7. In nutrition, special attention should be focused on young people in the countryside, as there are 10 percent more overweight and obese, compared with urban areas.

Slovenian [Youth 2013](#), a successive study of young Slovenian people, shows the following trends among young people in respective fields:

- Self-rated health (SRH):
  - Of respondents (aged 15+), 61.7% rated their health as 'good' or 'very good'.

- The same data indicate that the highest levels of self-rated health are among youth (aged 15–29), with 87.1% rating their health as 'good' or 'very good'.
- A longitudinal analysis of the Slovenian Health Behaviour In School-Aged Children (HBSC) 2002, 2006 and 2010 data indicates a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of adolescents rating their health as 'poor' or 'fair'. The analysis also shows that the decrease during this period was detected only among girls. On the other hand, boys rated their health significantly higher than girls in each of the observed years.
- Alcohol use and attitudes toward alcohol:
  - Between 1995 and 2011, there was an increase in the proportion of adolescent respondents reporting the consumption of any alcoholic beverage during the past 12 months (87% in 2011; 5th highest among participating countries) and an increase in the proportion having had five or more drinks on one occasion during the past 30 days (53% in 2011; 5th highest among participating countries). Between 2007 and 2011, there was an increase in estimated average alcohol consumption among those who reported using alcohol. Results from the Youth 2010 survey show similar results.
  - There was a significant increase in the proportion of 15-year-olds who reported having consumed their first alcoholic beverage at the age of 13 or earlier.
  - Boys reported drinking alcohol more frequently than girls did; trends from the observed period indicate that girls are beginning to drink as frequently as boys.
  - Widespread alcohol use among Slovenian youth is likely a consequence of the ubiquity of alcohol in Slovenian society. Slovenia is rather tolerant of the practice, and adults tend to consume alcohol frequently.
- Tobacco use:
  - In 2013, every fourth young person reported smoking daily, and 40% of Slovenian youth smoked at least occasionally (regularly or occasionally). Among youth, 60.0% were 'non-smokers'. Compared with the findings of the Youth 2010 study, the proportion of regular smokers increased (although minimally) in 2013.
  - The percentage of non-smokers also increased (from 54% to 60%).
  - Smoking has remained popular among one-quarter of Slovenian youth.
- Body-mass index (BMI):
  - Comparing youth study data from 2010 and 2013, the proportion of overweight young people increased minimally by 1.3%.
  - The proportion of youth within the 'normal' range fell from 74.1% to 71.6%, largely due to an increase in underweight youth from 3.8% to 5.0%.
  - The proportion of overweight or obese youth is higher among men, older youth and youths not enrolled in school.
- An unhealthy lifestyle and self-rated health:
  - Those who reported a higher frequency of smoking also consumed alcohol more frequently. Smoking was not significantly associated with BMI, while BMI was associated with alcohol use.
  - Associations between the three risk behaviours (alcohol, tobacco use and BMI) and self-rated health were examined, controlling for the same standard socio-demographic variables. Interestingly, alcohol use was not significantly associated

with self-rated health, while more frequent tobacco use and higher body-mass index were associated with poorer self-health ratings.

- General trends:
  - In 2013, self-rated health levels among Slovenian youth were similar to youth populations from other countries.
  - Self-rated health was significantly higher among men. There was no explanation for this trend.
  - Two per cent of Slovenian youth reported consuming alcohol 'regularly/daily', which was a decrease over 2010, when 4% reported being 'daily' drinkers.
  - In 2013, data showed an increase in the non-drinking population from 2010.
  - Almost three-quarters (74%) of Slovenian youth believed alcohol is 'acceptable'.
  - Compared with 2010, the proportion of 'regular' smokers remained stable in 2013.
  - The percentage of 'non-smokers' increased in this period (from 54% to 60%).
  - Between 2010 and 2013, the proportion of obese youth remained stable.
  - The proportion of overweight youth increased by 1.3 percentage points.
  - Youth who smoked also consumed alcohol more frequently.
  - Smoking was not significantly associated with the risk of being overweight or obese, while being overweight or obese was associated with alcohol use.
  - The healthiest youth in Slovenia (as measured by self-rated health) were non-smokers and those within the normal weight range.

## Main concepts

According to the [National Institute of Public Health](#), public health is defined as the science and skill of preventing disease, strengthening health and prolonging life through organised societal efforts.

## 7.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

Governmental authorities involved in policy making in the field of health of youth are:

- The [Ministry of Health](#) (Ministrstvo za zdravje)
- The [National Institute of Public Health](#) (Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje; NIJZ)
- The Public Health Directorate ([Direktorat za javno zdravje](#)) of the Ministry of Health
- The [Directorate of Family](#) (Direktorat za družino) of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- The [Higher Education Directorate](#) (Direktorat za visoko šolstvo) of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

The main actors in the field of health of youth representing youth are:

- The National Youth Council of Slovenia ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)) as an umbrella organisation of youth organisations operating at the national level
- No Excuse Slovenia ([Mladinska zveza Brez izgovorov Slovenija](#)) as a national youth organisation acting in the public interest

- The [Slovenian Student Union](#) (Študentska organizacija Slovenije) as the main organisation representing the interests of all Slovenian students.

The responsibilities for youth health among public actors are distributed as following:

- The Ministry of Health is the main authority responsible for public health, disease prevention and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.
- The National Institute of Public Health is a central national institution whose main purpose is to study, protect and increase the level of health and well-being among the population of the Republic of Slovenia through raising the awareness of the population and other preventive measures.
- The Public Health Directorate strives to prevent disease at the population level.
- The Directorate of Family of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is responsible for measures and policies in the field of family; family policy is understood as a set of coherent social, economic, legal, pedagogical, health and other measures implemented to improve the quality of life of families and individual family members.
- The Directorate of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport ensures the implementation of activities in the field of education, and thus also measures in the field of health.

Under the Health Services Act ([Zakon o zdravstveni dejavnosti](#)), responsibilities are distributed as follows:

According to Article 5:

- The network of public health services at the primary level is determined and provided by the municipality or city.
- The Republic of Slovenia participates in the provision of a public health service network at the primary level in demographically endangered areas in accordance with the healthcare plan.
- The Republic of Slovenia exceptionally determines and provides public health services at the primary level for the healthcare of students.

The responsibilities for youth health among organisations that represent youth are distributed as following:

- The National Youth Council of Slovenia prepares programme documents on the topic of youth health.
- No Excuse Slovenia specifically focuses on the health and well-being of young people.
- The Slovenian Student Union represents the interests of students in the fields that include health, sport and social affairs.

## **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

Governmental authorities are responsible for cross-sectorial cooperation, depending on the issue being considered.

The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) has a special section on health and well-being. According to different priority subsections, different public actors cooperate:

1. Priority subsection 1: ensuring systematic conditions for regular physical activity: the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport cooperates with the Ministry of Health.
2. Priority subsection 2: providing systematic conditions for balanced nutrition for young people aged 15–29: the Ministry of Health cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food.

3. Priority subsection 3: providing systemic conditions for monitoring and taking action with overweight or obese young people aged 15–29: the Ministry of Health cooperates the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
4. Priority subsection 4: providing systemic conditions for reducing risky and harmful use of alcohol: the Ministry of Health cooperates the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food; and the Ministry of the Interior.
5. Priority subsection 5: providing systematic conditions for encouraging the cessation of smoking by young people: the Ministry of Health cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.
6. Priority subsection 6: reducing demand for illicit drugs and preventing the supply of illicit drugs: the Ministry of Health cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of the Interior.
7. Priority subsection 7: providing systematic conditions for the healthy and safe entertainment of young people and managing violence related to public events and sports, as well as vandalism: the Ministry of the Interior cooperates with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food; the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; the Ministry of Health; the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief; and the Ministry of Justice.
8. Priority subsection 8: providing systematic conditions for improving the sexual and reproductive health of young people: the Ministry of Health cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.
9. Priority subsection 9: reducing the number of children and young people who commit suicide: the Ministry of Health cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; and the Ministry of the Interior.
10. Priority subsection 10: developing mechanisms for early recognition and treatment of young people with mental health problems: the Ministry of Health cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; and the Ministry of the Interior.
11. Priority subsection 11: raising awareness among employers, mentors and supervisors about the risks and measures related to the work of young workers, as well as promoting a culture of safety among youth, including the introduction of health and safety at work in education and training: the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; the National Institute of Public Health; the University Medical Centre (UKC) Ljubljana – Clinical Institute for Occupational, Traffic and Sport Medicine; social partners; and occupational safety and health professionals.
12. Priority subsection 12: providing systematic conditions for improving the traffic safety of young people: the Slovenian Traffic Safety Agency cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.
13. Priority subsection 13: increasing the number of young people using public passenger transport: the Slovenian Traffic Safety Agency cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.
14. Priority subsection 14: inclusion of young people in the design, implementation and evaluation of health-related programmes for the environment: the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning cooperates with the National Institute of Public Health; the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; the Slovenian Traffic Safety Agency; and the Slovenian Environment Agency.
15. Priority subsection 15: raising awareness among young people and their training to carry out healthy lifestyle activities to reduce environmental health risk factors: the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning cooperates with the National Institute of Public Health; the University Medical Centre (UKC) Ljubljana; hospitals; and the Slovenian Environment Agency.

The framework for cross-sectorial cooperation is also set out in the Programme for Children and Young People 2006–2016 ([Program za otroke in mladino 2006–2016](#)), which was renewed in 2013 (see Section 7.3).

## 7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

### National strategy(ies)

There are several national strategies and programmes addressing sport, youth fitness and physical activity:

1. [National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 \(Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022\)](#)

The programme defines priorities and measures that are in the public interest in the youth sector, among which are health and well-being. Led by the [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#), it involves eight ministries and several agencies and institutes, among which are the following:

- [Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities](#) (Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti),
- [Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning](#) (Ministrstvo za okolje in prostor),
- [National Institute of Public Health](#) (Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje),
- [Slovenian Environmental Agency](#) (Agencija RS za okolje),
- [Office of Republic of Slovenia for Youth](#) (Urad RS za mladino).

Proposed measures focus on the health and well-being of young people with an emphasis on the promotion of mental and sexual health, sports, physical activity and a healthy lifestyle, as well as the prevention and treatment of injuries, eating disorders, addiction and drug abuse. Two specific target groups are identified: Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) and Roma youth. The action plan ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2016 in 2017](#)) for the implementation of measures was prepared for the years 2016 and 2017 and for the years 2018 and 2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2018 in 2019](#)). Monitoring and evaluation of the programme is the responsibility of the Office of RS for Youth.

The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) foresees several priority measures and their indicators:

**Objective: Promoting regular physical activity, balanced nutrition and maintenance of the recommended body weight among young people (15–29 years).**

1. *ensuring systematic conditions for regular physical activity.* Indicator: proportion of young people who are regularly physically active. Between 2006 and 2014, there was a significant increase in the proportion of adolescents who were active at least two to three times a week in their leisure time.
2. [National Programme for Nutrition and Health Enhancing Physical Activity \(HEPA\) 2015–2025 \(Nacionalni program o prehrani in telesni dejavnosti za zdravje 2015–2025\)](#)

The programme aims to address the physical activity habits of the Slovenian population from the early years of life to old age, as well as to promote daily physical activity. Led by the [Ministry of Health](#), it involves 16 ministries or administrative agencies and institutes, in addition to non-governmental organisations and professional associations. Among those are the following:

- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport,

- [Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food](#) (Ministrstvo za kmetijstvo, gozdarstvo in prehrano),
- [Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning](#),
- [Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities](#),
- [National Institute of Public Health](#).

Proposed measures include:

- commitment to ensuring the availability of green open spaces for recreation and organised sports activities, especially for socially disadvantaged groups;
- promotion of nature as a space for recreation and physical activity;
- promotion of active transport;
- measures to ensure the affordability of high-quality sports and HEPA programmes, financed from public funds;
- cooperation among the health, education and social services sectors and sports clubs and local communities in increasing the physical activity levels of children, especially children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

No specific target group has been identified within the youth population. The action plan ([Akcijski načrt za izvajanje Resolucije o nacionalnem programu o prehrani in telesni dejavnosti za zdravje 2015–2025 do leta 2018](#)) was prepared for the implementation of specific measures, along with monitoring and evaluation, for the period up to 2018.

### 3. [National Programme of Sports of the Republic of Slovenia 2014–2023](#) ([Nacionalni program športa v Republiki Sloveniji 2014–2023](#)).

Led by the [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#), it involves numerous administrative agencies and institutes, in addition to non-governmental organisations and professional associations. Among these are the following:

- Ministry of Health,
- Ministry of Infrastructure (Ministrstvo za infrastrukturo),
- Faculty of Sport of University of Ljubljana,
- National Institute for Public Health.

Implemented on the basis of the action plan ([Izvedbeni načrt nacionalnega programa športa v Republiki Sloveniji 2014–2023](#)), the main objective of this programme is to increase the share of the population active in sports. It contains measures such as support to public entities implementing the programme (schools included) and other initiatives concerning youth (e.g. physical education in formal education, sports in extracurricular activities and physical education of children and youth with special needs). The programme identifies special-needs pupils and students as a specific target group and provides special measures.

### 4. [Strategy for the Health of Children and Youth in Connection with the Environment \(2012–2020\)](#) ([Strategija za zdravje otrok in mladostnikov v povezavi z okoljem 2012–2020](#)).

Led by the Ministry of Health, it involves eight ministries and two administrative agencies and institutes. It is implemented on the grounds of the action plan ([Akcijski načrt za izvajanje strategije Republike Slovenije za zdravje otrok v povezavi z okoljem 2012–2020](#)). The framework is set up until 2020. One of the four main topics covered in this strategy is reducing the problem of obesity and injuries by providing a safe environment for physical activity and healthy nutrition.

## Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

The National Programme of Sports of the Republic of Slovenia 2014–2023 ([Nacionalni program športa v Republiki Sloveniji 2014–2023](#)) provides general framework for the promotion and support of sport and physical activity. The National Programme was followed by an action plan with a timeframe to 2020 ([Izvedbeni načrt Nacionalnega programa športa v Republiki Sloveniji 2014–2023](#)).

The sub-sections on sport programmes, sport events and the promotion of sport, as well as on social and environmental responsibility in sport, contain various measures with the aim of promoting and supporting sport activities. Below, some of the aims provided in the programme are listed:

1. ensure at least one hour of quality guided sports exercises daily for everyone in the group of children and youth;
2. update and increase the quality and attractiveness of existing leisure programmes for children's and young people's sports education;
3. provide at least two hours of free, quality guided leisure activities per week for pupils and high school students;
4. encourage the integration of schools and sport, charity and other associations on the local level for the implementation of mobile programmes for children and youth with special needs;
5. update and increase the quality and attractiveness of affordable sports activities in universities' extracurricular activities;
6. develop a national campaign to promote sports behaviour;
7. promote the ambassador for sport, tolerance and fair play;
8. have a national campaign to promote regular sporting, more exercise, healthful eating and the maintenance of a healthy living environment.

The programme provides specific measures aimed at monitoring and evaluating activities, such as evaluation of the work of sport educators, quality of sporting achievements, the number of properly educated and qualified personnel etc.).

The following sources of public funding are available for the national programme:

1. local authorities (where activities take place).
2. government ministries:
  - [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#),
  - [Ministry of Finance](#),
  - [Ministry of Defence](#),
  - [Ministry for Economic Development and Technology](#),
  - [Ministry of the Interior](#).
3. Sport Foundation ([Fundacija za šport](#)).
4. Foundation for financing disability and impairment organisations ([Fundacija za financiranje invalidskih in humanitarnih organizacij](#)).
5. European structural funds.

The annual sports programme defines activities and projects for the implementation of national programme measures and the extent of public funds. The annual sports programme 2017 ([Letni program športa 2017](#)) envisaged public funding of sport for children and youth and sports recreation in the range of 5.065.772 EUR and the annual sports programme 2018 ([Letni program športa 2018](#)) envisaged public funding of sport for children and youth and sports recreation in the range of 6.420.325 EUR.

Several other initiatives promote and support sport and physical activity among young people:



1. Let's Learn Swimming ([Naučimo se plavati](#)), which has existed since 1994. The main purpose of this programme is to increase the number of swimmers and improve the swimming abilities of children and young people through swimming courses and swimming tests. Data obtained from the programme are used annually for a national-level analysis of swimming knowledge.
2. Young Mountain Hiker ([Mladi planinec](#)), which has existed since 1969. It directs youth toward healthy living in nature by familiarizing them with the basics of mountaineering activities and safety measures in the mountains.
3. programmes for the inclusion of young people with disabilities in sports and sports organisations.

The programmes listed above follow several EU physical activity guidelines, such as maintenance and improvement in muscular strength and endurance, resulting in an increase in functional capacity to carry out activities of daily living and maintained motor functions including strength and balance.

### Physical education in schools

It is mandatory for primary schools to provide 2–3 lessons (45 minutes each) of physical education (PE) per week. In secondary schools, it is mandatory to provide 1–3 lessons (45 minutes each) per week.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports runs a national scheme for after-school HEPA promotion entitled Healthy Lifestyle ([Zdrav življenjski slog](#)). The aim of the project is to encourage primary school children to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The programme currently reaches 20–30% of the primary school population and provides a further five hours of physical activity per week on top of the mandatory PE lessons during school hours. The National Programme for Nutrition and HEPA 2015–2025, implemented in 2015, also promotes active travel to school.

The action plan for national programme envisages promotion of extracurricular activities in the field of sport and is backed by the following measures:

1. impacting the content and organisational update of sports programmes and promoting their implementation at the place of study,
2. co-financing year-round sports programmes offering an important health effect at the place of study,
3. co-financing sports events at the university and national level that have a high health impact,
4. promoting lower pricing for sports services and free programmes for students.

Regarding higher education, since the implementation of Bologna Process, physical education has been missing from the curricula. It should be noted that the action plan for the National programme for Youth 2016–2017 envisages the following measure: repositioning sports education as a compulsory subject in the first year of all study programmes. Moreover, the National programme for Youth 2018–2019 predicts introduction of additional, free sport activities for students of secondary vocational and vocational schools and students.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport recommends that schools implement physical activities during school breaks called 'recreational breaks'. Some of the activities that take place are the following:

1. fit break/active breaks
  1. fit breaks aim to:
    1. satisfy the need for games, happiness, joy;
    2. reduce fatigue and the negative consequences of sitting;
    3. relax and renew mental energy;
    4. influence motivation to work and support easier and better work;

5. create a relaxed atmosphere;
6. promote a healthy life in the future.
2. a fit break usually comprises:
  1. relay competitions,
  2. elementary games,
  3. ball games,
  4. balloon games,
  5. games with a string,
  6. games with stones,
  7. fun games.
2. interesting sport activities
  1. This comprises activities that try to ensure the daily sports exercise of children, upgrade to compulsory school sports education or introduce other sport that are among the leisure sports on offer.
3. sport competitions
  1. School sport competitions are seen as an important link between school sports education and students' leisure activities.
  2. Presenting the overcoming obstacles as a challenge (which is also a competition) is important for a child's life, and at the same time, it is important for his or her healthy personality development. An appropriate number of requirements and limitations are urgently required.
  3. The basic purposes of school competitions are cooperation, mutual companionship and comparing knowledge. By encouraging appropriate competitiveness and cooperation, healthy rivalry, respect for sporting behaviour, tolerance and acceptance of difference, positive behavioural patterns are formed among pupils.
4. sport programmes
  1. Detailed information is available in the sub-section 'Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people'.

Pedagogical support is offered by the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, where research guide ([Raziskovalni vodič](#)) contains resources in the field of pre-school and school sports education, motor skills, outdoor activities, ball games, winter activities, outdoor activities, swimming, athletics, gymnastics, mountaineering, dance and water activities. Access to ordered foreign resources outside the UL location is provided to students and employees of the UL through a remote access service.

## Collaboration and partnerships

The National Programme of Sport in the Republic of Slovenia 2014–2023 ([Nacionalni program športa v Republiki Sloveniji 2014–2023](#)) envisages collaboration and partnership among several institutions and stakeholders throughout the strategy. However, emphasis is placed on the formation of partnerships among schools, sport associations, charity organisations and other associations at the local level regarding children and youth with special needs. The funds required for implementing annual programmes of sport at national level shall be determined by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (for the state budget) and Board of the Foundation for Sport for funds from gambling. At the local level, these funds are set by the municipal councils. To this end, measures of the action plan ([Akcijski načrt za izvajanje strategije Republike Slovenije za zdravje otrok in mladostnikov v povezavi z okoljem 2012–2020](#)) are being implemented:

- A set and promotional material and other awareness tools, educational programme and implementation (Development and implementation of training for health care staff and workers in educational institutions for the prevention of injuries/poisoning);

- Developed counselling and implementation programme (Development and implementation of health education programmes and prevention counselling injuries/poisoning and promotion of involvement in first aid courses);
- Teaching tools and education for educators and teachers in educational institutions (Inclusion of the content of injury prevention/poisoning and first aid in the regular syllabus for educational institutions).

There is no information regarding public funds available to support collaboration and the formation of partnerships.

## 7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

### National strategy(ies)

1. [The National Programme for Nutrition and Health Enhancing Physical Activity \(HEPA\) 2015–2025 \(Nacionalni program o prehrani in telesni dejavnosti za zdravje 2015–2025\)](#)

The programme not only encompasses a strategy for HEPA but also for nutrition. Regarding nutrition, the programme aims to address:

- ensuring healthful eating habits in accordance with guidelines and recommendations for different age groups (with special emphasis placed on organised school and student food; see chapter 5.1.1. and 5.1.2),
- ensuring access to healthful eating choices for socially and economically disadvantaged groups,
- raising consumer awareness,
- providing information and raising general awareness, including through public health campaigns.

2. [Rules on carrying out preventive healthcare at the primary level \(Pravilnik za izvajanje preventivnega zdravstvenega varstva na primarni ravni\)](#)

Introduced back in 1998, these rules aim to address following topics:

- reducing the risk of diseases related to reproduction, as well as addressing unplanned and unwanted pregnancies,
- supporting early detection of cancer causing premature disease, disability and mortality,
- ensuring the enforcement of reproductive rights and promotion of reproductive health.

On the basis of the rules, health education for children and adolescents (those who attend school) is carried out ([Vzgoja za otroke in mladostnike \(šolarje\)](#)) by the National Institute of Public Health. The programme is carried out annually.

The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) anticipates several priority measures and their indicators.

**Objective: Promoting regular physical activity, balanced nutrition and maintenance of the recommended body weight among young people (15–29 years)**

1. *providing systematic conditions for balanced nutrition for young people aged 15–29.* Indicators: the share of young people eating the recommended quantities of fruit and vegetables; the share of young people enjoying sweet drinks and sweets; the proportion of young people regularly enjoying breakfast; the share of young people regularly eating organic food.

2. *providing systemic conditions for monitoring and taking action with regard to overweight or obese young people aged 15–29.* Indicator: share of overweight and obese youth.

**Objective: Prevention of smoking and first smoking attempts, risky and harmful use of alcohol and illicit drugs; ensuring healthy and safe youth entertainment; and managing violence related to sports, as well as vandalism**

1. *providing systemic conditions for reducing risky and harmful use of alcohol.* Indicators: share of young people who do not drink alcoholic beverages by gender; proportion of young people who do not drink alcoholic beverages regularly by gender; proportion of young people who do not drink risky or harmful amounts.
2. *providing systematic conditions for encouraging the cessation of smoking by young people.* Indicators: the proportion of young people who do not smoke and the proportion of young people who quit smoking by gender.
3. *reducing demand for illicit drugs and preventing the supply of illicit drugs.* Indicator: the proportion of young drug users by gender.
4. *providing systematic conditions for the healthy and safe entertainment of young people and managing violence related to public events and sports, as well as vandalism.* Indicators: establishment of business conditions for private entities that provide healthy and safe entertainment for young people and number of youth vandalism offenses.

**Objective: Strengthening care for the sexual and reproductive health of young people and family planning**

1. *providing systematic conditions for improving the sexual and reproductive health of young people.* Indicator: incidence of young people with sexually transmitted infections by gender.

## Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

1. [‘For Youth Health’](#) (Za zdravje mladih)

This is an informal network that connects main actors in the youth sector and equips them with information, materials, guidelines, trainings/education in the field of health and healthy lifestyle of children and youth.

The network was established through the project starting on 1 February 2015 (concluding on 31 October 2016) and was financed by the EEA/Norway grants providing co-financing in the amount of 351.076,35 (75,8%) EUR and the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy providing co-financing in the amount of 61.954,65 (13,4%) EUR. The total budget of the project amounted to 463.031.00 EUR. The project was led by the [Slovenian Catholic Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Association](#) (Skavti) and the Youth Network No Excuse Slovenia ([Mladinska zveza Brez izgovora Slovenija](#)), with the collaboration of the following:

- Scouts Association of Slovenia ([Taborniki](#)),
- National Youth Council of Slovenia ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)),
- National Public Health Institute, and
- Slovenian National Radio and Television ([RTV Slovenija – Infodrom](#)).

The aim of the project was to address following topics and aims:

- development of evidence-based prevention initiatives for the growing Slovenian youth sector,
- work towards a healthier lifestyle for Slovenian children and adolescents aged 12 to 19,
- additionally, work with their parents, youth workers and youth leaders who have a direct impact on young people's health.

Currently the key financier of the network is Ministry of Health. The network regularly prepares different trainings and other projects in its field, including current Open call for local programmes in the project For Youth Health 2.0 ([Razpis za lokalne programe v okviru projekta Za zdravje mladih 2.0](#)).

#### 2. Wind in the Hair ([Veter v laseh](#))

The aims are promoting a healthy lifestyle and preventing risky behaviour and substance usage. Sports social events aim to include those who are less active in sport, while at the same time raise the awareness of young people about the positive effects of a healthy and active lifestyle and the negative consequences of addictions (such as drugs and alcohol). It is annually carried out by the Sport Union of Slovenia ([Športna Unija Slovenije](#)). It is funded by the [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#); the Foundation of Sport ([Fundacija za šport](#)); and the [Ministry of Health](#).

#### 3. Model 'Healthy Lifestyle' ([Model Zdrav življenjski slog](#))

The aims are promoting a healthy lifestyle and healthful eating and nutrition, as well as preventing risky behaviour and substance usage. The intention is to integrate the contents of a healthy lifestyle into the school space on various levels – from curricular to extracurricular activities – with the aims of involving pedagogic workers, parents and health workers and ensuring that every Slovenian child receives health-related content and has a related lifestyle during his or her schooling. The model was integrated into all basic schools in Slovenia. It does not target specific groups within youth. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport funded the model.

#### 4. Slovenian Network of Healthy Schools ([Slovenska mreža zdravih šol](#))

This is a permanent project coordinated by the National Institute of Public Health. The network responds to problems related to the health of children and youth, and it carries out proven programmes for the promotion of health in physical, mental, social and environmental aspects of pupils' health. No specific group is target within the project. The project is annually adjusted and an action plan is put together accordingly. Project outcomes are annually evaluated.

#### 5. 'Health in Kindergarten' ([Zdravje v vrtcu](#))

This is a programme that was developed by the former Institute for Health Care Ljubljana in 2006 and is nowadays implemented by the National Institute for Public Health in collaboration with kindergartens all over the state. The aim of the programme is to build capacity of kindergartens to create environment that place well-being and health as important values and strive to create conditions for well-being and health and strengthen individual's ability to maintain and improve health throughout life.

#### 6. 'Actively to School' ([Aktivno v šolo](#))

This is an ongoing programme coordinated by the [Institute for spatial policies](#) (Inštitut za politike prostora) and co-financed by the Ministry of Health. It is a continuation and upgrade of Sustainable Mobility at School (Trajnostna mobilnost v šoli) project that lasted 2016 and 2017 and 'Healthy Pupil' Programme (Program Zdrav šolar) that lasted in 2015 and 2016. The aim of the project is supporting schools and municipalities in promoting active mobility to school.

## Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

### Health education

At the upper secondary level, the health education and healthy lifestyles lessons are held as part of compulsory optional content ([obvezne izbirne vsebine](#)). The recommended duration is 15 hours in a single sitting. Topics covered are the following:

- concepts of health (medical, philosophical, cultural, psychological, etc., as well as intercultural differences),
- youth and health (physical, mental and social development from birth to death, as well as relationships with the body and gender differences),
- lifestyles, life conditions and culture (balanced diet; physical activity; importance of the environment for health; responsible attitude towards smoking, alcohol and drugs; sexuality and interpersonal relations; family planning; pregnancy and childbirth; sexual abuse, harassment and pornography; sexually transmitted diseases and prevention; and sexual orientation),
- health situation in Slovenia (life expectancy, fertility, mortality and major health problems, infectious diseases, chronic diseases, mental disorders, traumatism and health promotion and health education),
- healthcare (rights and obligations relating to health; health and accessibility; healing; presentation of, ways of using, and accessibility to information on when and where it is possible to access services and programmes).

### Sex education and personal relationships education

Slovenia does not have a specific sex education policy in basic schools and at later stages of education. The [National Education Institute Slovenia](#) states that the content set of healthy and safe sexuality is recorded in the programme of elementary and secondary school work. The programme has been prepared by a team of experts and is designed to provide recommendations for schools' overall orientation to health as a value. Content assemblies are defined with goals, content and recommended literature for teachers and pupils, but each individual teacher decides whether to teach the proposed programme.

Sex education and personal relationships education is part of the compulsory optional content (for more information, see above, 'Health education, third indent, life styles, life conditions and culture').

Graduate nurses are continually involved ([example](#)) in the sexual education of children during preventive examinations, namely systematic examinations in elementary school, which are carried out in the 1st, 3rd, 6th and 8th grades of the basic school, as well as in the 1st and 3rd years of high school.

## Peer-to-peer education approaches

Since 2012, the national youth organisation No Excuse Slovenia ([Brez izgovora Slovenija](#)) has conducted peer-to-peer education programmes on the topic of reproductive health. The activities were aimed especially at young people who, due to the influence of various substances, enter into risky sexual relations

Also since 2012, the Association Happy Kitchen (Društvo Vesela kuhinja) provides education programmes for children and adolescents on processes in culinary and self-supply processes. Schools all around the state are involved in their project Kitchen and stuff ([Kuhna pa to](#)) where children cook healthy traditional meals for their peers. The project is ongoing and co-financed by the Ministry of Health. In September, 2018, the European Commission - DG SANTE identified the project as the Best of 10 Practices in Europe in the field of healthy and a sustainable lifestyle in relation to food. The project is part of the presentation strategy of Slovenia for the Gastronomic Region of Europe 2021.

In 2017, the Institute of Republic of Slovenia for Sport Planica ([Zavod za šport RS Planica](#)) began with the implementation of the project 'Youth for Youth' ([Mladi za mlade](#)). The aim of the project is providing free sport activities for students of secondary vocational schools, vocational schools and students professionally guided by the young sport graduates (under the age of 29) and thus also equip young sport graduates with competences in order to enhance chances for their (long-term) employability. The project will end in 2021 and is co-funded by the European Union and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

The Resolution on National programme of Mental Health 2018–2028 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018–2028](#)) also mentions expansion of existing and development of new peer-to-peer support activities as one of its measures for implementing in the next decade.

## Collaboration and partnerships

There is no top-level initiative for collaboration and the formation of partnerships among schools, youth workers and health professionals promoting youth health. However, the Youth Association No Excuse Slovenia ([Mladinska zveza Brez izgovorov Slovenija](#)) is active in the field of promoting health, focusing on following fields:

- tobacco,
- alcohol,
- illicit drugs,
- gambling,
- eating disorders,
- mental health.

Efforts so far have been upgraded through three pilot programmes with interventions:

1. My Campaign ([Moja kampanja](#)), aiming to present a realistic and unattractive picture of tobacco and smash smoking myths that are prevalent among young people.
2. [Martin Krpan](#) programme, providing an integrated approach to preventing the development of tobacco and alcohol addiction, involving both young people and their teachers and parents.
3. Project Thank You ([Hvala](#)), focusing on the prevention of peer violence.

No Excuse offers various workshops and lectures on the above-mentioned topics. Whether or not the collaboration comes to fruition depends on the agreement between the association and the respective school that is included in the annual work plan for the upcoming school year. Youth Association Without Excuse Slovenia is a non-governmental non-profit organization, financed by public sources and by donations of individuals.

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

Information providers/counselling structures:

The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) foresees several priority measures and their indicators:

### **Objective: Reducing the impact of a changing environment on the health of young people**

1. *raising awareness among young people and training them to carry out healthy lifestyle activities to reduce environmental health risk factors.* Indicator: the number of young people aware of the health risks from exposure to environmental risk factors.

The National Institute of Public Health is the main provider of valuable and useful information regarding health in general and specifically on issues of youth health. The Institute is a publicly funded institution that implements several programmes and counselling:

- Health Education for Children and Youth ([Vzgoja za zdravje za otroke in mladostnike](#))

The goal is to inform and motivate children and youth to take care of their health. Through various programmes, they are enabled to acquire knowledge and formulate attitudes and behaviours for a healthy lifestyle.

- Slovenian Network of Healthy Schools ([Slovenska mreža zdravih šol](#))

The concept is to have a network of schools promoting health. They respond to the health problems of children and youth.

- School Pot ([Šolski lonec](#))

Includes a modern information tool that can be used by professionals in educational institutions and the general public in their everyday work and healthcare.

The youth network No Excuse Slovenia ([Brez izgovora Slovenija](#)) is one of the rare NGOs that conducts peer-to-peer awareness-raising campaigns on the topics of tobacco, alcohol, nutrition and reproductive health.

No specific contact point exists for youth to access and receive information on having a healthy lifestyle.

#### Youth-targeted information campaigns

1. The Sport Institute of Republic of Slovenia Planica ([Zavod RS za šport Planica](#)) carries out the campaign Healthy Lifestyle 2015–2018 ([Zdrav življenjski slog 2015–2018](#)). The campaign seeks to promote a healthy lifestyle among Slovenian children and youth while they attend school. It is implemented through daily, regular and quality physical education. The timeframe is 2015–2018.
2. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport carries out the campaign Traditional Slovenian Breakfast ([Tradicionalni slovenski zajtrk](#)) with support of the [Ministry of Health](#) and [Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food](#). The aim of campaign is to promote healthy nutrition, support local production and promote health-enhancing physical activity. The project is carried out annually.
3. The [Agency for Agricultural Markets and Rural Development](#) (Agencija RS za kmetijske trge in razvoj podeželja) carries out the measure School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme ([Shema šolskega sadja in zelenjave](#)). The aim of this measure is to stop the trend of reduced fruit and vegetable consumption and at the same time limit the rise in children's excessive body weight and obesity.
4. The National Institute of Public Health carries out the programme Safe with the Sun ([Varno s soncem](#)). Through this preventive programme, attention is drawn to the importance of proper protection against the harmful effects of sunshine. It is a longstanding project.
5. The National Institute of Public Health carries out the professional monitoring of compliance of school meals with professional guidelines ([Strokovno spremljanje skladnosti šolske prehrane s strokovnimi usmeritvami](#)). The professional monitoring of school nutrition through professional guidance and counselling for educational institutions in the field of healthful and balanced school nutrition is a continuous task.
6. The project 'Let's Enjoy Health': To reduce the obesity of children and youth ([Projekt 'Uživajmo v zdravju': Za zmanjšanje debelosti otrok in mladostnikov](#)) is a coherent project intended to promote healthy lifestyles, health-enhancing physical activity and healthful nutrition. The project is carried out by the [National Education Institute Slovenia](#) with support of the National Institute of Public Health. The project comprises various approaches, such as the development of intervention programmes, models and tools for integrated treatment and prevention of obesity



among children and youth. The purpose is to improve the functioning of the existing system, structures and interdepartmental and interdisciplinary cooperation in support of health.

7. The National Institute of Public Health offers [Youth on Mental Health \(Mladostniki o duševnem zdravju\)](#), a publication with the aim of promoting mental health among children and youth. Detailed information is available in section 7.5 Mental health.
8. The Ministry of Health implements the action [Dance 0,0 – Drive 0,0 \(Pleši 0,0 – Furam 0,0\)](#), which is supported by the National Institute of Public Health. The aim of the action is to prevent young people from drinking alcohol and driving under the influence.
9. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities implemented a campaign on preventing violence against women: 'Violence is #pointless' ([Nasilje je #čistmim](#)). This public and media campaign aimed at raising awareness of violence against women was introduced in the fall of 2015 and lasted for a couple of months.

## 7.5 Mental health

### National strategy(ies)

Resolution on National programme of Mental Health 2018–2028 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018–2028](#)) is a strategic document with the aim to determine measures in the field of mental health for the next decade. Adopted in March 2018 has a timeframe lasting until 2028.

Measures regarding mental health of children and adolescents are one of the priorities of the programme. It predicts the measures that would increase accessibility of relevant services and institutions, especially for the mental health of children and adolescents. Within this aim the programme predicts:

- the establishment of Centres for mental health of children and adolescents;
- counselling offices for children and adolescents;
- subspecialist teams for children and adolescents;
- an adequate number of pedopsychiatrist cadres and psychiatric units for children and adolescents;
- introduction of the mental health concept in kindergartens and schools;
- programmes of early interventions for children and adolescents;
- expansion of existing and development of new peer support activities;
- programmes for reducing peer violence;
- programmes for particularly vulnerable and excluded youth (migrants, school drop-outs, minorities);
- online counselling for children and adolescents and preventing non-chemical addictions of children and adolescents (such as addictions related to social media and computer games).

Monitoring and implementing the strategy is the responsibility of the [Ministry of Health](#).

The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) foresees several priority measures and their indicators:

**Objective: Strengthening positive mental health and reducing suicide mortality among young people**

1. *reducing the number of children and young people who commit suicide*. Indicator: the number of children and young people who commit suicide.

2. *developing mechanisms for early recognition and treatment of young people with mental health problems.* Indicator: the amount of funding earmarked for programmes to help young people in need.

## Improving the mental health of young people

'This Is Me' ([To sem jaz](#)) prevention programme was designed by the Department of Social Medicine and Health Promotion of the Institute of Public Health Celje ([NIJZ – Območna enota Celje](#)) and was financed by the Norway Grants financial mechanism. The National Institute of Public Health ([Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje](#)) has implemented it since 2014 with the support of the Ministry of Health. The programme is designed to support young people in developing a positive self-image and self-esteem and teaches them life skills, thus helping to prevent the development of mental disorders. The programme does not target a specific group but is intended for the general youth population encountering difficulties. Evaluations are scheduled annually (following the school year) and carried out by the National Institute of Public Health. Positive trends are for example, showing more positive relations and positive feelings in the classroom. The programme won five domestic and international awards (Prizma 2012, Izidor 2008, Netko 2007, best poster of the [European Public Health Association](#), Izidor 2005).

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

### Policy framework

There are two top-level policy frameworks:

1. Resolution on the National Programme on Mental Health 2014–2018 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2014–2018](#)) and Resolution on National programme of Mental Health 2018–2028 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu duševnega zdravja 2018–2028](#)). Further information is available in section *7.5 National Strategy(ies)*
2. Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme 2013–2020 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2013–2020](#)), which aims to develop a coherent social welfare system. The resolution was proposed by the responsible ministry in the field of welfare, the [Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities](#). It was adopted in 2013, and its timeframe extends until 2020. Its aims are to establish 30-day centres for the implementation of prevention programmes and the organisation and implementation of assistance, support and self-help, including one telephone support line for children and youth and two housing units for youth.

### Stakeholders

Governmental stakeholders (responsible for coordinating and monitoring activities):

- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities;
- [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#).

Other public stakeholders:

- [National Institute of Public Health](#) (Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje),
- Centres of Social Work ([Centri za socialno delo](#)),
- schools in the national grid of public education.

The designated and mobilised staff are schoolteachers and personnel, social workers and professional health workers.

Non-governmental stakeholders:

- Salesianum Institute ([Zavod Salesianum](#)): Programme Rock – Youth Street Education ([Skala – mladinska ulična vzgoja](#)). This programme aims to provide each user with individual treatment and to develop a network approach to solve each youth's problems.
- [Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth](#) (Zveza prijateljev mladine): TOM telephone ([Telefon TOM](#)) is a phone help line for children and adolescents. TOM was created as an emotional support for children and young people who face various questions, dilemmas or distress in the process of growing up.
- Society for Preventive Work ([Društvo za preventivno delo](#)) organises various youth workshops on preventive work in the field of health.
- Institute BOB ([Zavod BOB](#)) organises various projects and initiatives regarding different health aspects of young people (e.g. Network Youth Street – [Mreža Mlada ulica](#)).
- DrogArt Association ([Združenje DrogArt](#)) is a non-profit voluntary and humanitarian organisation with the aim to reduce harmful effects of drugs and alcohol among young people.

The designated and mobilised staff for implementing the abovementioned programmes and projects are mainly youth workers.

## Guidance to stakeholders

Professional guidance is targeted toward school counsellors, psychologists, social workers, non-governmental organisations professionals, professional staff of centres for social work and other experts. The body designated as responsible is the National Institute of Public Health. Its tasks comprise providing information, skills and education, as well as training on identifying symptoms and preparing and publishing materials.

Examples of guidelines and handbooks:

- *When a pupil faces stress, what can a teacher do* ([Ko učenca stresa stres in kaj lahko pri tem naredi učitelj](#)),
- *Support for tackling anxiety – handbook for workshop leaders* ([Podpora pri spoprijemanju s tesnobo - priročnik za vodje delavnice](#)),
- *Healthy lifestyle of secondary school students – mental health* ([Zdrav življenjski slog srednješolcev - duševno zdravje](#)),
- *Improving mental health at school* ([Izboljševanje duševnega zdravja v šoli](#)).

## Target groups

Resolution on the National Programme of Mental Health 2014–2018 defines the following groups as its target (see 2.1 Children and young people – [Otroci in mladostniki](#)):

- those who require special care (children and youth who are chronically and often ill),
- children and youth with central nervous system disorders,
- children and youth with mental disorders,
- children and youth who are growing up in unfavourable family conditions and children who live among constant stress (e.g. due to separation from parents)
- early leavers from education and training,
- children and youth from families with a lower socioeconomic status,
- children and youth with fewer friends,
- children and youth who have poorer learning success and who attend a less demanding secondary school programme.

## Funding

Sources of public funding:

- the public budget of responsible ministries ([Ministry of Health](#); [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#); and [Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities](#)),
- local communities (municipalities).

Type of activities supported:

- education and training for workers in the field of mental health,
- implementation of programmes,
- counselling activities for children and youth,
- school counselling centres and professional centres for children and youth with special needs,
- new forms of placement for children and youth with mental disorders.

## 7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

Preventive health programmes for children and adolescents ([Preventivni zdravstveni programi za otroke in mladostnike](#)) are a cluster of measures taken to provide children and youth with preventive health programmes using the concept of a youth-friendly health service and a lifelong perspective approach. The aim of the programmes is to update preventive health care for children and adolescents with new tools and interventions focusing on reducing inequalities and reducing the risk of chronic non-communicable diseases, using the concept of a youth-friendly health service and a lifelong perspective approach.

NOW Programme – Health Today for Tomorrow ([Program ZDAJ – program ZDRAVJE DANES ZA JUTRI](#)) is an example of a programme that was part of a broader project, Together for Health ([Skupaj za zdravje](#)). The long-term goals of the project are to reduce the occurrence of chronic non-communicable diseases associated with an unhealthy lifestyle, which could be achieved by early detection of the risk of these diseases, a lifelong perspective approach and interventions and approaches to reduce health inequalities. The programme ran from 24 September 2013 until 30 September 2016 and was carried out by the [National Institute of Public Health](#) with the [Norwegian Institute of Public Health](#) as a partner. Project Together for Health was financed by the [Norway Grants](#) as part of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009–2014.

## 7.8 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

Two reforms have been active in the field of health and well-being of youth in Slovenia:

1. Healthcare and Health Insurance Act ([Zakon o zdravstvenem varstvu in zdravstvenem zavarovanju](#)).

The compulsory insurance scheme for students over the age of 26 remains unchanged. Students are compulsorily insured as permanent residents in the Republic of Slovenia, which means that they themselves are liable for payment of the contribution and entitled to the medical benefit. If they are socially endangered, they can exercise the right to payment of the compulsory health insurance contribution in the social field, which means that the municipality where they are permanent residents pays the contribution, and they are entitled to the payment of health benefits. When they reach the age of 26, students

become taxpayers for the payment of health benefits. At that time, all income is calculated according to the Income Tax Act, including family pensions.

## 2. Student Status Act ([Zakon za urejanje položaja študentov](#))

On 23 October 2017 the Student Status Act ([Zakon za urejanje položaja študentov](#)) was adopted which amends the Health Care and Health Insurance Act ([Zakon o zdravstvenem varstvu in zdravstvenem zavarovanju](#)). The change in the amendment allows a student to be insured as a family member, not by the time she/he reaches the age of 26, but by the end of the academic year in which she/he reaches the age of 26.

## Ongoing debates

There are no other relevant current debates related to youth health.

# 8. CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

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Cultural organisations are one of the two types of organisations in Slovenia that have the biggest number of members among youth. Cultural institutions and organisations, at both national and local levels, enable young people access to facilities where they can creatively spend their leisure time, offering them a number of cultural activities, which they can join and actively participate in.

Main governmental actor in the field of culture is the Ministry of Culture, responsible for regulating matters in the sphere of culture.

There is no coherent strategy on creativity and culture for young people. However, the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) has a special section on Culture, creativity, heritage and media. The Programme stresses the importance of "systematic cultural education and importance for culture to be present at all school levels and throughout the educational process, as well as public cultural infrastructure to be accessible to children and youth." The topic addresses several measures intended to reduce obstacles to young people's access to culture. Implementation of measures within the Programme is a responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and local communities and authorities. Programmes, measures and policies are financed by various public actors, mostly by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Public Fund of Republic of Slovenia for Cultural Activities and other public institutions in the field of culture.

In Slovenia, there is no graduate or postgraduate study of cultural management offered at universities. A proposed postgraduate study of cultural policies and cultural management was also rejected. In general, the business environment for cultural management in Slovenia is poorly developed. However, according to report on [Arts and Cultural Education at School in Europe](#), Slovenian education system comprises of the curricula that establishes a link between the development of pupils' creativity and the importance of encouraging 'entrepreneurial spirit'.

A new Resolution on the 2021-2028 National Programme for Culture is under preparation, the draft is expected to be prepared by the end of 2021.

## 8.1 General context

### Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation

Cultural institutions and organisations at both the national and local levels as well as in all areas of culture enable young people to access facilities where they can creatively spend their leisure time, while offering them a number of cultural activities to join and actively participate in. By the provision of state or local (municipal) financial support and/or

through the volunteering of creators (artists) and professional workers in cultural institutions and organisations, a number of such activities are financially accessible.

A greater level of development (offering diverse and quality programmes and activities) of individual institutions, organisations and facilities primarily intended for young people is still characteristic only of larger urban centres, especially the capital. On the other hand, in the rest of Slovenia, local youth centres, as already emphasised, represent the only practical form of youth infrastructure in Slovenia, providing the majority of youth activities.

In Slovenia, 4.9% of all employed persons work in the the field of culture, whereas the average percentage of such employments in the EU is 3.7%. A similar difference between Slovenia and the EU average can be found in the 15–19 year age group. In Slovenia, 5,0% of all employed persons aged between 15–19 works in culture, whereas this percentage in the EU is 3.6% (see [data](#)).

Like many other countries, Slovenia also faces the problem of a lack of data on the creative and cultural industry. [The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (SURS [Statistični urad RS]) does not monitor the creative industries as a separate category, which makes them difficult to analyse in detail or to compare to international data, not to mention analysing trends and policies related to youth.

## Main concepts

Those who are [self-employed in culture](#) ([Samozaposleni v kulturi](#)) are creators who engage in an independent specialised profession in the field of culture. The status is formally regulated through the Decree of self-employed professionals in culture ([Uredba o samozaposlenih v kulturi](#)). For many artists, this is a long-term form of employment status.

The amateur culture and its organisation is a unique phenomenon in Slovenia, comparing it to other European countries. About 110,000 people work in various cultural associations around the country, conducting around 25,000 events per year for 4 million visitors. Through amateur culture operate many (academic) choirs, folklore groups, musicals, theatre groups etc. Everything works on a voluntary basis or is project financed and is accessible to wide population. The main umbrella organisation that connects many actors in all fields of amateur culture is the [Public Fund of the Republic of Slovenia for Cultural Activities](#), through which many cultural projects are also co-financed.

## 8.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

The main governmental actor is the **Ministry of Culture** (Ministrstvo za kulturo), responsible for regulating matters in the sphere of culture which are in the public interest.

Other public actors include the following:

- [Public Fund of the Republic of Slovenia for Cultural Activities](#) (Javni sklad RS za kulturne dejavnosti).
- The [Slovenian Book Agency](#) (Javna agencija za knjigo Republike Slovenije) is a body governed by public law and established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. It carries out professional, developmental and executive tasks related to the implementation of strategic documents and directives in the field of books as well as activities promoting development in the field of literature and other tasks in the public interest provided by the law.
- The goal of [the Slovenian Film Centre](#) (Slovenski filmski center) is to encourage creativity in the audiovisual field in Slovenia by creating suitable conditions for film, cinematographic and other audiovisual activities.

- The [Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia](#) (Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine) is a public institution which carries out professional and administrative tasks in the field of preservation of both stationary and accompanying movable and vivid cultural heritage.
- Museums and galleries ([Muzeji in galerije](#)). Some museums prepare workshops and programmes for young people and high schools.
- Libraries ([knjižnice](#)), which are well visited in Slovenia.
- Theatres ([gledališča](#)). Some theatres prepare performances that are especially targeted at young people and/or are related to the high schools' literature curriculum.
- The Centre of Creativity was established in June 2017 as part of a project aiming to foster further development of the creative and cultural industry in Slovenia. The centre is under the supervision of the Museum of Architecture and Design ([Muzej za arhitekturo in oblikovanje](#)).
- [The Slovenian Cinematheque](#) (Kinoteka). Four departments carry out activities of the Cinematheque – the programme, archive and museum as well as the research and publishing department, which also takes care of the library and the mediatheque. In addition to these activities, the Cinematheque also publishes the film magazine, *Ekran*.

Other (non-governmental) organisations include the following:

- [Asociacija](#) seeks to ensure sustainable conditions for the professional functioning of non-governmental organisations and of independent creators active in art and culture. It also seeks to improve their systemic position. The network began to operate informally in 1992. Today it is a professionally coordinated modern advocacy and service organisation.
- [Bunker](#) is a non-profit organisation for the realisation and organisation of cultural events, especially in the field of performative arts.
- [Dance theatre Ljubljana](#) (Plesni teater Ljubljana) is a non-profit organisation for organisation of cultural events, especially in the field of dance and theatre.
- [En-Knap](#) is a non-profit organisation for the realisation and organisation of events in the field of contemporary dance. They also organise the 'didactic dance performances' for young people, through which the audience (young people, especially teenagers) learn about art, creativity, dance and theatre.
- [SCCA, Center for Contemporary Arts – Ljubljana](#) is a non-profit organisation for the realisation and organisation of events in the field of contemporary visual and new media arts. One of their activities is also a school for curatorial practices and critical writing which targets young people.
- [Emanat, Institute for development and affirmation of dance and contemporary art](#) is a non-profit organisation in the field of performative arts, which operates in areas of artistic production, education and publishing.
- Bufeto Institute ([Zavod Bufeto](#)) is a non-profit organisation that prepares events in the field of clown theatre. They also organise performances and workshops targeted at young people.

## Cross-sectorial cooperation

The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) has a special section on culture and creativity. However, the current Implementation Plan of the Resolution on the National Youth Programme 2013-2022 for 2020 and 2021 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2020 in 2021](#)) does not foresee any measure/instrument in the field of culture and creativity.

## 8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people

### Existence of a national strategy

There is no coherent strategy on creativity and culture for young people.

The last valid national strategy in the field of culture, was the Resolution on the 2014-2017 National Programme for Culture ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu za kulturo 2014-2017](#)). This was the strategic instrument of cultural policy development planning. However, the programme did not specifically address creativity and culture for young people; it was, rather, a general strategy in the field of culture. Some measures also included youth, but with specific regard to creativity and culture, none of the measures was intended for them. The encouragement of the participation and education of youth is mentioned in the topic of education and training in culture. The new programme for culture (2021-2028) is in preparation, the draft is to be presented by the end of 2021.

The National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) was adopted in 2013. This programme has a special section on culture, creativity, heritage and media, and it stresses the importance of "systematic cultural education and importance for culture to be present at all school levels and throughout the educational process, as well as to be accessible to children and youth public cultural infrastructure". However, the current Implementation Plan of the Resolution on the National Youth Programme 2013-2022 for 2020 and 2021 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2020 in 2021](#)) does not foresee any measure/instrument in the field of culture and creativity.

### Scope and contents

The National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) addresses the following relevant priority measures (and their indicators).

#### ***Objective: Concern for the availability of high-quality cultural services and the participation of young people in culture***

1. To provide conditions for strengthening the participation of young people in culture. Indicators: increasing the share of quality programmes and projects which actively involve young people; increasing the proportion of programmes and projects prepared by young people (either students, employees, freelance cultural workers or volunteers).
2. To provide young people with the conditions for better access to cultural heritage and their active involvement in heritage projects. Indicators: the number of projects carried out, including the active participation of young people of all ages and from different social backgrounds in learning and protecting cultural heritage; the inclusion of different areas of fixed, movable and live heritage in curricula (within compulsory subjects/elective subjects/extracurricular activities).
3. To provide the conditions for greater accessibility of active cultural creativity for young people in terms of continuous forms of non-formal education for various artistic fields. Indicator: the number of new quality continuous forms of education (number of new areas).
4. To provide spatial and technical conditions for the artistic creation of young people (infrastructure, etc.), for becoming acquainted with and dealing with heritage. Indicators: an increase in the number of appropriately landscaped spaces in which young people can create or engage in artistic activities; better geographical coverage with MMC and other appropriately regulated spaces for young people.
5. For the youth of indigenous national communities, the Roma community, communities from the Declaration of the Republic of Slovenia on the status of the national communities of the former SFRY members in the Republic of Slovenia and other minority communities and other vulnerable groups, ensure the accessibility of



culture, their active and creative role in the development of their culture, their equal participation in cultural life and at the same time, quality integration. Indicator: the number of cultural projects involving (or intended for) young people from autochthonous national communities, the Roma community, communities from the Declaration and other minority communities and other vulnerable groups.

***Objective: Concern for literacy in Slovene, other mother tongues and foreign languages, and media literacy***

6. Development of reading literacy. Indicators: improving international literacy research results and the results of national literacy examinations (graduation in high school).
7. Promotion of reading and the planned development of reading culture. Indicator: participation of young people in projects of reading culture – reading badge, Cankar competition and other reading projects (family literacy, etc.).
8. The development and promotion of media literacy and the preparation of an action plan for media literacy. Indicators: designing the starting points for the adoption of measures for the development and promotion of media literacy; the implementation of starting points; the introduction of media literacy in elementary and secondary education and the creation of programmes for lifelong education in the field of media literacy.
9. Professional training of professionals in education in the field of reading and media literacy and in the field of innovative approaches to education and art education, and support of research in this field at the national level. Indicator: the amount of research in this field.

***Objective: Culture and creativity are recognised in the society as the cornerstone of the general education of each individual***

10. Cultural and arts education gets an appropriate place in the entire educational system. Indicator: the inclusion of different fields of art and cultural heritage in curricula (compulsory/elective subjects).

**Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Culture cooperate to enhance the participation of young people in culture and in the field of providing young people with the conditions for better access to cultural heritage and for their active involvement in heritage projects.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Culture cooperate with the Public Fund for Cultural Activities to provide greater accessibility of active cultural creativity for young people in terms of a continuous form of non-formal education in various artistic fields; to provide spatial and technical conditions (infrastructure, etc.) for the artistic creation of young people; for the benefit of the national communities of the former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia and other minority communities and vulnerable groups ensuring the accessibility of the culture to young people from autochthonous ethnic communities, the Roma community and the communities in the Declaration of the Republic of Slovenia.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Culture cooperate with the National Education Institute Slovenia, the Educational Research Institute, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and the Slovenian Book Agency to enhance reading literacy.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Culture cooperate with the National Education Institute Slovenia and the Slovenian Book Agency to promote reading and the systematic development of reading culture.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Culture cooperate with the National Education Institute Slovenia to enhance media literacy and to prepare an action plan for media literacy.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of Culture and the National Education Institute Slovenia cooperate with the Slovenian Book Agency and the Educational Research Institute to provide training for professionals in education in the field of reading and media literacy and in the field of innovative approaches to education and art education, and in supporting research at the national level.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Culture cooperate with the National Education Institute Slovenia and the Educational Research Institute in the field of providing appropriate place for cultural and arts education in the educational system.

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Sector for public diplomacy and international cooperation in culture](#) is established. The sector carries out tasks in the field of international cultural cooperation, including the coordination of activities in the preparation of implementation programmes in culture, and the promotion of Slovenian culture abroad. In cooperation with the competent national, European and international institutions sector plans and coordinates activities in the field of foreign cultural policy of the Republic of Slovenia. Among the working areas of the sector are also the care for the return of works of art and the care for artistic works that Slovenia received from the succession.

## Revisions/updates

A Resolution on the 2021–2028 National Programme for Culture is in preparation.

## 8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation

### Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

The Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) prioritises, among other things, culture, creativity, heritage and media. The issue concerns a set of measures to reduce the barriers young people face when accessing culture. The Implementation Plan of the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 for 2016 and 2017 and the Implementation Plan of the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 for 2018 and 2019 covered several projects, public procurement and policies. One of the objectives is to set out to Ensure the accessibility of quality cultural services and the participation of young people in culture. The current Implementation Plan ([for 2020 and 2021](#)) does not contain any instruments/measures in the field of culture.

Several initiatives are also in effect to help promote culture and participation in cultural activities, such as:

- COOL Subscription (2019/20) ([Kul Abonma](#))
  - COOL subscription was intended for young people between the ages of 15 and 25.
  - It combined the productions of various Ljubljana public cultural institutions and covered various branches of art: theatre, film, music and visual arts.
  - The purpose of the sponsorship was to enable young people to visit the most diverse artistic production, hence the adjusted price of € 25.
- [KinoTrip](#)
  - Film programme Youth for Youth – film club, international film festival and other film events.
  - Kinotrip is intended for young people aged 15 years and is formed with them.

- At Kinotrip's film events throughout the year, movies from the regular Kinodvor schedule are being discussed, which is followed by various social events with interesting guest joining occasionally.
- [Kino Šiška](#)
  - Since 2009 the central Slovenian institution in the field of contemporary concerts, supplemented by the programmes of visual and performing culture.
  - Students, pensioners, registered unemployed persons, registered self-employed persons in the field of culture and media and groups of over 5 people can benefit from a 20% discount on the purchase of pre-sales tickets
- Puppet theatres across Slovenia
  - Cultural-art programmes bring a selection of quality, diverse and accessible activities that touch the various levels of the theatre. They provide an in-depth experience of the theatre and offer suggestions on how to transform theatre work even more creatively with the curriculum and encourage the implementation of socially engaged ideas at the crossroads of culture and art, science and technology.
- [Glej, Student Theatre](#)
  - The Public Fund of the Republic of Slovenia for Cultural Activities, Theatre Glej, Ljubljana, The Slovene National Theatre, Nova Gorica and GT22 Maribor annually invite everybody interested in theatre, between 18 and 30 years of age to join the StudenTheatre.
  - The idea behind the project is to create one or more student theatre groups. A mentor is dedicated to each group, however, one does not operate as a theatre director, but as somebody who offers help the group form their concept and help them through their study process.
  - The goal of the project is for the groups to develop own theatre poetics and present them in an original theatre performance.

## Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

The Implementation Plan for Period 2016–2017 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2016 in 2017](#)) and The Implementation Plan for the Period 2018–2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2018 in 2019](#)) enlist the following measures:

- Week of cultural heritage
  - Project aims include: accessibility of content (events are free of charge), cross-curricular positioning of content from the field of heritage, an open learning environment, cross-curricular integration, the networking of organisations from different fields (heritage, culture, education, tourism, sport, local communities and non-governmental organisations) and principles of formal and non-formal education.
  - The project is co-funded by the Ministry of Culture in the amount of 3,500 EUR in a single year (2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019).
- [Growing up with a book \(Rastem s knjigo\)](#)
  - This is a national project promoting reading culture.
  - The project is carried out by the [Slovenian Book Agency](#) (Javna agencija za knjigo RS) in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Association of General Libraries ([Združenje splošnih knjižnic](#)) with

the support of the [National Education Institute Slovenia](#) (Zavod RS za šolstvo), the Association of School Librarians of Slovenia (Društvo šolskih knjižničarjev Slovenije) and the [Slovene Writers' Association](#) (Društvo slovenskih pisateljev).

- The project is co-funded by the Ministry of Culture in the amount of 80,000 EUR in 2016 and 2017 and in the amount of 75,000 EUR in 2018 and 2019.

## Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

Some of the projects mentioned above, which are part of the Implementation Plan for Time Period 2016–2017 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2016 in 2017](#)) and The Implementation Plan for the Period 2018–2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2018 in 2019](#)), are described here:

- Funding programmes for Slovenian film heritage intended for young people
  - This finances programmes of the [Slovenian Cinematheque](#) (Slovenska kinoteka), including the Pedagogical Programme for Children and Youth.
  - It is co-funded by the Ministry of Culture in the amount of roughly 23,000 EUR in 2016 and 2017..
- Week of cultural heritage ([Teden kulturne dediščine](#))
  - This is a national interdepartmental project. The goal of the Cultural Heritage Week is to increase the content of heritage-related content in educational processes, in formal and non-formal education.
  - The measure includes monitoring the number of primary and secondary schools involved and the number of young people involved (indicators).
  - The measure is financed in the amount of 3,500 EUR annually (in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019).
  - Implementation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture.

The national interdepartmental project of Cultural Heritage Week is closely linked to the Europe-wide project, Days of European Cultural Heritage, and represents its upgrading in terms of the development of the target audience (children and young people). The goal of Cultural Heritage Week is to increase the content of heritage-related content in educational processes, in both formal and non-formal education.

- Obtaining additional knowledge for young people in the field of cultural activities within the framework of the [Public Fund of the Republic of Slovenia for Cultural Activities](#) (Javni sklad RS za kulturne dejavnosti)
  - This promotes adapted training and the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and experience to young people (especially in the field of cultural heritage).
  - It is co-funded by the Ministry of Culture in the amount of 400,000 EUR per year.

## 8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

### Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

Art forms are regarded as separate objects. The arts as a curricular area is compulsory through the entire first level of education (ISCED 1) and also in lower secondary education (ISCED 2).

The following is the status of different art subjects in the national curriculum:

- Art – an optional arts subject ([Umetnost](#))
- Dance – part of another compulsory non-arts subject ([Športna vzgoja](#))
- Drama – part of another compulsory non-arts subject ([Slovenščina](#))
- Music – compulsory arts subject ([Glasbena vzgoja](#))
- Visual arts – compulsory arts subject ([Likovna vzgoja](#)) Ethnology – Cultural Heritage and Ways of Life – optional subject ([Etnologija – kulturna dediščina in načini življenja](#))
- Film Education – optional subject ([Filmska vzgoja](#))
- Music – ensemble music, music works, music project – one-year subject ([Glasba – Ansambelska igra, Glasbena dela, Glasbeni projekt](#))
- Dance activities – folk dances, dance, antique and social dances – one-year subject ([Plesne dejavnosti – Ljudski plesi, Ples, Starinski in družabni plesi](#))
- Slovene language – theatre club, literature club, school journalism – one-year subject ([Slovenščina – Gledališki klub, Literarni klub, Šolsko novinarstvo](#))
- Art history – what the artworks are telling us, shape and style, life depicted in art – one-year subject ([Umetnostna zgodovina – Kaj nam govorijo umetnine, Oblika in slog, Življenje upodobljeno v umetnosti](#))
- Artistic design I, II and III – one-year subject ([Likovno snovanje](#))

In ISCED 3, students must complete optional compulsory contents (**obvezne izbirne vsebine**), one of which is Cultural and Art Content, which include and interconnect activities in music, fine arts, film, dance, theatre and word art as well as the activities of learning and preserving the natural heritage. The duration of these contents is 15 hours.

Slovenia encourages cross-curricular links between the arts and all other subjects as part of the aims for the whole curriculum.

In 2009, the National Guidelines for Cultural and Arts Education in Training and Education (**Državne smernice za kulturno-umetnostno vzgojo v vzgoji in izobraževanju**) were adopted. The list of areas in accordance with the aims of cultural and arts education includes and connects:

- reading culture
- film and audiovisual culture
- musical art
- Intermedia art (multimedia)
- cultural heritage and technical culture
- fine arts (painting, sculpture, photography, architecture, design ...)
- performing arts (theatre, puppets, contemporary dance ...)

This list of areas is open and is in no way complete. The aims of cultural and art education are intertwined and complementary:

- realising the fundamental human right to education and participation in the cultural field
- developing creativity
- developing individual abilities
- improving the quality of education
- developing an aesthetic sensitivity and a critical attitude towards culture and art
- expressing cultural diversity

- raising the level of cultural awareness
- promoting awareness of the importance of national cultural heritage

Non-formal learning is also supported and encouraged (see also [Chapter 8.4 – Promoting culture and cultural participation](#)).

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

Professional workers in kindergartens and schools did not systematically encounter cultural education during their formal education, although in many study programmes (preschool education, classroom instruction etc.) they learned about individual fields of art.

Each year, the **Ministry of Education, Science and Sport** issues a catalogue of programmes for further education and the training of professionals in education (**Katalog programov nadaljnjega izobraževanja in usposabljanja strokovnih delavcev v vzgoji in izobraževanju**). These kinds of professional training and seminars in the field of cultural and art education are carried out by various experts from different institutions and organisations. Quality training, involving professionals from cultural institutions and artists, is also presented within the **Cultural Bazaar** (Kulturni bazar) in the catalogue of offerings of cultural and art education (Katalog ponudbe kulturnoumetnostne vzgoje (2019)). The Cultural Bazaar offers education and training for professionals in culture and youth fields as well as for the general public.

### **Providing quality access to creative environments**

The Implementation Plan for the Period 2016–2017 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2016 in 2017](#)) and The Implementation Plan for the Period 2018–2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2018 in 2019](#)) i

- A direct call for directors of public institutes in the field of culture to submit their financial plans and work programmes for 2016–2017 and for 2018–2019.
  - In accordance with the proposals of the programmes of the work of public institutes in the field of cultural heritage, public institutions will provide spatial and technical possibilities (infrastructure, etc.).
  - The measure is financed in the amount of 200,000 EUR each year.
  - Implementation is the responsibility of the [Ministry of Culture](#).
- Youth programme in the field of amateur cultural activities
  - This includes performing a programme of events for children and youth in the field of the following artistic types: choral, theatre and puppet theatre, literature, instrumental music, folklore dance, film and fine arts. The programme is implemented in cooperation with elementary schools.
  - The measure includes monitoring the increased share of quality programmes and projects which actively involve young people (indicator).
  - The measure is financed in the amount of 150,000 EUR annually (in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019).
  - Implementation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture.
- Funding programmes for Slovenian film heritage intended for young people
  - This includes funding programmes of the Slovenian Cinematheque, including the Pedagogical Programme for Children and Youth.

- The measure includes monitoring the increased share of quality programmes and projects which actively involve young people (indicator).
- The measure is financed in the amount of 22,246 EUR in 2016 and 2017.
- Implementation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture.
- Growing up with a book ([Rastem s knjigo](#))
  - This is a national project promoting reading culture, implemented and managed by the Slovenian Book Agency.
  - The measure includes monitoring the increased share of quality programmes and projects which actively involve young people (indicator).
  - The measure is financed in the amount of 80,000 EUR annually (in 2016 and 2017) and 75,000 EUR in 2018 and 2019.
  - Implementation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture.
- Support for projects and programmes for youth by the [Slovenian Book Agency](#)
- The support is provided for projects and programmes in the broad field of reading culture, literary events, trainings, publishing books intended for young people.
- The indicator is participation of young people in reading culture development events.
- The measure is financed in the amount of approximately 200,000–300,000 EUR annually (in 2018 and 2019).
- Implementation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture.

## 8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture

### Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities

In terms of education, Slovenia abolished the special department for cultural management and/or cultural policy. The proposed postgraduate study of cultural policies and cultural management was also rejected.

In general, the business environment for cultural management in Slovenia is poorly developed; public funds which achieved enviable levels in the past have shrunk significantly. (Between 2009 and 2014, the funds of the **Ministry of Culture** fell by 21%.) Between 2014 and 2019, the funds of the Ministry of Culture slightly increased again (for 6.8%). There are no measures in the field of entrepreneurship in culture and the cultural and creative industries.

However, according to the report on Arts and Cultural Education at School in Europe, the Slovenian education system comprises curricula which establish a link between the development of pupils' creativity and the importance of encouraging an "entrepreneurial spirit". The Chair of Cultural Studies was established in 1994. It unites the emphases of British cultural studies, anthropology, religious studies and insights from contemporary sociology and philosophy. The Chair offers undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD programmes in Cultural Studies.

There are study programmes at the **Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana** (Fakulteta za družbene vede, Univerza v Ljubljani) in the field of culture: Undergraduate Programme Cultural Studies (**Kulturologija**), Master's Programme Cultural Studies – Studies in Culture and Religion (**Kulturologija – kulturne in religijske študije**) and several interdisciplinary doctoral programmes: **Balkan Studies, Cultural Studies, Developmental Studies, Ethnic and Migration Studies, Religious Studies** and **Social and Political Anthropology**. The Cultural Studies programme provides with a broad understanding of the various layers of cultural reality, allowing students to move

between different planes of contemporary cultural landscapes. No emphasis, however, is put on entrepreneurship.

The [Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana](#) (Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani) implements study programmes in the field of art and culture: Undergraduate and Master's Programme Sociology of Culture (**Sociologija kulture**), Undergraduate and Master's Programme [Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology](#), Undergraduate and Master's Programme Musicology ([Muzikologija](#)) Undergraduate and Master's Programme Comparative Literature and Literary Theory ([Primerjalna književnost in literarna teorija](#)), Undergraduate and Master's Programme Art History ([Umetnostna zgodovina](#)). The study programmes provide an insight into different cultural and artistic spheres, but no emphasis is put on entrepreneurship.

The situation is more favourable in the field of design, where the [Faculty of Design](#), an associated member of the University of Primorska (Fakulteta za dizajn, pridružena članice Univerze na Primorskem), has implemented the study programme of **Design Management** at the under- and postgraduate levels.

The Summer School of Cultural Management (**Poletna šola kulturnega menedžmenta**) has existed since 2015. This school is a university project within the Art Council, jointly organised by four faculties of the **University of Ljubljana**: the **Faculty of Economics**, the Academy of Fine Arts and Design (**Akademija za likovno umetnost in oblikovanje**), the [Academy of Music](#) (Akademija za glasbo) and the **Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television** (Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo).

## Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

There is no specific programme for young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors. It should be noted that the National Programme on Culture 2014–2017 (**Nacionalni program za kulturo 2014-2017**) envisaged the creation of the Centre of Creativity ([Center za kreativnost](#)). It was established in June 2017 as part of a project aiming to foster further development of the cultural and creative industries in Slovenia. The centre gives priority to supporting innovative forms of the new economy emerging from the creative industries ("start-ups", "co-working", "service jam"), linking products with companies and supporting the development of social innovation and social entrepreneurship projects. Some of their activities target young people, such as the competition within the Creative-Engineering Green Incubator ([Kreativno-inženirski Zeleni Inkubator](#)) in 2020. In the cycle of [Pop-Upstart](#) events in Maribor, young Slovenian artists from various fields of the creative sector are enabled to present their products to a wider audience.

## 8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

### New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

The **Ministry of Education, Science and Sport** adopted the Strategic Guidelines for Further Introduction of ICT in Slovenian Educational Institutions by 2020 (Strateške usmeritve nadaljnjega uvajanja IKT v slovenske VIZ do leta 2020) in January 2016. These guidelines call for fostering creativity and innovation, and in this context, the use of new technologies is a key factor in creating new value. The guidelines further rely on European Commission projects such as:

- [DIGCOMP: A Framework for Developing and Understanding Digital Competence in Europe](#) – to innovate with technology, to actively participate in collaborative digital and multimedia production and to express oneself creatively through digital media and technologies and
- [Rethinking Education: Investing in Skills for Better Socio-economic Outcomes](#) – to foster excellence and innovation and create new multidisciplinary curricula to promote skills such as entrepreneurship, real-time problem solving and creative thinking.



No lines of public funding devoted to support further introduction of ICT are specified in the document. However, chapter 8 of the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (**Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja**), the main act in the field of basic training and education, envisages the systematic financing of elementary education.

## Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

The National Programme on Culture 2014–2017 (**Nacionalni program za kulturo 2014-2017**) envisages the following measures:

- better conditions for collecting, accessing and permanently preserving Slovenian written cultural heritage in libraries in classical and digital forms
- increased availability of specialised public library services and their higher quality
- a higher level of protection and accessibility of archival material and
- whole topics intended for digitisation:
  - The aim is to digitise and store digital content from the field of culture, which is among the basic tasks of public institutions in the field of cultural heritage.
  - The following measures are being taken:
    - a continuous increase in the scope and online accessibility of digital content in the field of culture
    - digital preservation and public online availability of contemporary works
- Co-funding for the digitisation amounts to up to 6 million EUR for both measures plus additional funds if available

## 8.8 Synergies and partnerships

### Synergies between public policies and programmes

The National Programme on Culture 2014–2017 (**Nacionalni program za kulturo 2014-2017**) provides a basis for the creation of synergies between public policies and programmes. Examples of synergies include:

1. Cultural-artistic education: According to the Resolution on the 2014-2017 National Programme for Culture, *"In terms of content and mission, CAE appears at the crossroads of the cultural, educational and scientific sectors; therefore its planned development is the primary task of the [Ministry of Culture](#) and the [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#). Due to its recognisable effects on the integrated development of the individual and society as a whole, it is important to place it in all spheres of human activity and living, as well as in all periods of the individual's life, therefore its implementation and the responsibility of other departments (social, health, tourism, environment, economy, traffic, etc). Special attention is also being paid to various social groups and subcultures, which in one way or another involve various cultural activities"* (see page 105).

The aim in the respective fields is to establish a coherent CAE system, which can be planned over the long term, based on quality cultural production. The programme subsequently enlists the following measures:

- The appointment of the National Committee for CAE, which is responsible for implementing and monitoring the action plans in this area. Each area of culture has its own national coordinator for CAE; the committee includes representatives of the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), the [National Education Institute Slovenia](#), educational institutions and the Slovenian National Commission of UNESCO ([Slovenska nacionalna komisija za UNESCO](#));

- To encourage educational institutions to prepare and implement CAE in their annual work plans and educational programmes;
- Participation of the National Network of Coordinators of CAE in the educational institutions;
- Five intersectoral network CAE projects within the framework of the Cultural School project;
  - The project was already placed in the Action Plan for the Period 2016–2017 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2016 in 2017](#)) of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mlade 2013–2022](#)).
- Cultural School is a project aimed primarily at extracurricular cultural activities in basic schools, and it has a clear goal – to increase the quality and extent of active and passive cultural participation of pupils and their parents, grandparents and mentors in the field of extracurricular activities which are not part of the school curriculum.

## 2. The development of the market for creative industries

- The establishment of an interdepartmental working group to prepare a design strategy

The Action Plan for the Period 2016–2017 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2016 in 2017](#)) and the Action Plan for the Period 2018–2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2018 in 2019](#)) of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mlade 2013–2022](#)) include the following:

- Scholarships for specialised professions in culture
  - The scholarship policy under the Scholarship Act ([Zakon o štipendiranju](#)) is complemented by a scholarship policy based on the Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act ([Zakona o uresničevanju javnega interesa za kulturo](#)) and the National Programme on Culture.
  - Scholarships are intended for study programmes and fields, *“for some specific artistic professions in art and cultural heritage, [which] are aimed at raising key competences, increasing skills and acquiring additional skills as a condition for more successful integration of young people into the labour market”*.
  - The measure is financed in the amount of 291,666 EUR in 2016 and 2017, 434,164 EUR in 2018 and 676,336 EUR in 2019.

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

Examples of partnerships between the cultural and creative sectors include:

- Youth creative productions ([Mladinske kreativne produkcije](#))
  - From 1 July 2016 to 15 September 2018.
  - Led by the Youth Centre Dravinjske doline ([Mladinski center Dravinjske doline](#)), the project helped to create mechanisms which enabled young people in the field of architecture and design to acquire working competences while at the same time increasing their visibility and the need for their services in the labour market.
  - The project was financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and European Social Fund (in the amount of co-financing, 190c134.15 EUR).
- [ŠILA Impro league](#) (ŠILA Impro liga)

- Led by the Association for Culture and Education IMPRO (Društvo za kulturo in izobraževanje IMPRO).
- This is an annual project.
- The programme is based on theatre improvisation (improv theatre), a form of theatre which does not use pre-prepared elements. Scenes are created spontaneously on the spot. ŠILA is set as a tournament within each season, linked to the school year.
- Young people learn to become good improvisers through improvisational theatre, they learn group work and altruism and search for innovative solutions, different ways of expressing, etc. The programme encourages young people, both actors and spectators, to engage in cultural life.
- Target group: pupils between the ages of 15 and 19, about 300 participants.
- The programme has been co-funded by the Society for Culture and Education IMPRO in the amount of 20,119 EUR in 2016 and 2017, 27,657 EUR in 2018 and 2019 and the amount of 25,600 EUR in 2020 and 2021 on the basis of a public call for the co-financing of youth work programmes by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.
- Iternative Band
  - Led by the Youth Information and Cultural Club Murska Sobota ([Mladinski informativni in kulturni klub Murska Sobota](#)).
  - This is an annual project.
  - The project is based on the popularisation of media-ignored alternative genres, innovative and creative musical expressions of individual authors and performers and their non-commercial orientations. The project is also marked by an educational note, as many performers also perform free workshops for young people. The project addresses the public with respect to critical thinking, perceiving and accepting contemporary music production.
  - The project extends the horizons of critical thinking among young people and allows the local audience an insight into the musical offering.
  - Target group: young people at local and regional levels, 150 participants.
  - The programme of the organisation has been co-funded in the amount of 16,707 EUR in 2016 and 2017, 21,590 EUR in 2018 and 2019 and the amount of 22,800 EUR in 2020 and 2021 on the basis of a public call for the co-financing of youth work programmes by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.
- Platform BITI, Cultural-artistic society Pozitiv ([KUD Pozitiv](#))
  - This project represents a continuation of the original project and it is connected with the areas of sustainable ways of living, responsible consumption and finding creative and innovative solutions to improve the quality of life and coexistence in a particular community.
  - The project permeates the research character and openness, following the interests and needs of the participants and the current associated social challenges.
  - Target group: young people aged 15–35, approx. 1,000 participants.
  - The programme of the organisation was co-funded in the amount of 23,690 EUR 2016 and 2017 and the amount of 28,064 EUR in 2018 and 2019 on the basis of a

public call for the co-financing of youth work programmes by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

- Club scene
  - Led by the Public Institution for Culture, Youth and Sport Litija ([Javni zavod za kulturo, mladino in šport Litija](#)).
  - This involves the organisation of various musical and cultural events, especially of non-established authors, musicians, artists and genres which are not of a commercial nature.
  - In the premises of the Youth Centre Litija, a multimedia centre has been created. It enables young people to access technical equipment to share and co-create the programme of the centre.
  - Target group: young musicians, poets and creators, 100 participants.
  - The programme of the organisation has been co-funded in the amount of 21,337 EUR in 2016 and 2017, 21,814 EUR in 2018 and 2019 and the amount of 21,800 EUR in 2020 and 2021 on the basis of a public call for the co-financing youth work programmes by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.
- Youth Cultural Festival Kunigunda
  - Led by the Youth Centre Velenje ([Mladinski center Velenje](#)).
  - The beginning dates back to 1998. Kunigunda today is a symbol of young, alternative cultures in Velenje. Its programme consists of concerts, exhibitions, shows, lectures, performances, sports and intermedia contents reflecting the annual subcultural mosaic of interests which is created at the local level.
  - Its greatest achievement is the transfer of knowledge and quality leisure time.
  - Target group: Young people and fans of alternative culture, participation of at least 2,000 people.
  - The programme of the organisation has been co-funded in the amount of 24,061 EUR in 2016 and 2017, 23,828 EUR in 2018 and 2019 and the amount of 23,750 EUR in 2020 and 2021 on the basis of a public call for the co-financing of youth work programmes by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.
- Youth radio – Radio Galama
  - Led by the People’s University Radovljica ([Ljudska univerza Radovljica](#)).
  - The mission of the radio is to connect young people on their educational paths. It enables creative expression, communication, professional development and the acquiring of various social and communication skills, and it thus also offers young people numerous opportunities.
  - The main achievements are that young people get their first experience with public speaking, they connect with other musicians, they improve their emotions, they learn to present themselves, they gain self-confidence etc.
  - Target group: youth sector at local and regional levels.
  - The programme of the organisation has been co-funded in the amount of 12,712 EUR in 2016 and 2017, 12,865 EUR in 2018 and 2019 and the amount of 19,400 EUR in 2020 and 2021 on the basis of a public call for the co-financing of youth work programmes by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.
- Urban creatives

- Led by the Institute for Sport, Tourism and Leisure Sežana ([Zavod za šport, turizem in prosti čas Sežana](#)).
- The Intervention Open gallery and My Umbrella can be a balloon, for one day they change the purpose of a public space in a living space. With this, young people point to multifunctionality, usability and aesthetics, and through art, they become co-creators of public space.
- Young people recognise the medium in artistic intervention and how they can also contribute to the creation of public spaces and draw attention to these spaces' problems.
- Target group: young people between 13 and 29 years, 10 participants.
- The programme of the organisation has been co-funded in the amount of 21,156 EUR in 2016 and 2017, 22,261 EUR in 2018 and 2019 and the amount of 18,900 EUR in 2020 and 2021 on the basis of a public call for the co-financing of youth work programmes by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.
- Media engagement of young people
  - Led by the Association of Soft-landing Allies ([Društvo zaveznikov mehkega pristanka](#)).
  - Together with their partners and individuals, this association annually records more than 70 short film contributions for a monthly youth TV show, gives youth film workshops for young people, organises workshops in the field of film production etc.
  - In the process of informal, peer-to-peer learning through various workshops, young people explore and raise awareness of reality.
  - Target group: youth sector at local, regional, national and international levels.
  - The programme of the association has been co-funded in the amount of 27,143 EUR in 2016 and 2017, 30,098 EUR in 2018 and 2019 and the amount of 26,900 EUR in 2020 and 2021 on the basis of a public call for the co-financing of youth work programmes by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.
- Music workshops
  - Led by the LokalPatriot Youth Centre and the Youth club DNŠ ([LokalPatriot](#), [Mladinski klub DNŠ](#)).
  - At the workshops, young people learn the basics of playing guitar, bass guitars and drums and of singing.
  - Young people have the opportunity to spend their free time with a visit, and under the guidance of experienced musicians, they can improve their knowledge or learn the basics.
  - Target group: young people (15–29 years), 20 participants per workshop.
  - The programme has been co-funded in the amount of 13,256 EUR in 2016 and 2017, 16,109 EUR in 2018 and 2019 and the amount of 17,950 EUR in 2020 and 2021 on the basis of a public call for the co-financing of youth work programmes by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.
- Youth program
  - Led by the Carinthian Youth Cultural Centre Kompleks ([Koroški mladinski kulturni center Kompleks](#)).

- The programme provides access to quality non-commercial cultural goods, such as weekly cultural events in the fields of music and art and the possibility of non-formal education.
- Through mediation between young people and local authorities, there is a possibility for dialogue and co-decision on important youth issues. The programme provides young people with space for personal and career development.
- Target group: young people between 15 and 29 years, 5,000 participants.
- The programme has been co-funded in the amount of 10,623 EUR in 2016 and 2017, 12,417 EUR in 2018 and 2019 and the amount of 16,000 EUR in 2020 and 2021 on the basis of a public call for the co-financing of youth work programmes by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

## 8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

### Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities

The Implementation Plan for the Period 2016–2017 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2016 in 2017](#)) and The Implementation Plan for the Period 2018–2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2018 in 2019](#)) of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 (**Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mlade 2013–2022**) enlists the following measures in order to foster equality and young people's involvement:

- Obtaining additional knowledge for young people in the field of cultural activities within the framework of the Public Fund of the Republic of Slovenia for Cultural Activities
- With the additional acquisition of knowledge and practical training with quality mentoring, these measures seek to reach, among others, the following goals:
  - providing incentives for the employment of unemployed young people up to 29 years of age,
  - promoting tailor-made training and the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and experience to young people (especially in the field of cultural heritage),
  - promoting cultural entrepreneurship among young people,
  - supporting young people in implementing innovative projects which enable greater employability of this target group of the unemployed, developing appropriate competences and approaches to finding a job and
  - encouraging and developing the active citizenship of young people with the aim of employment in organisations active in the youth and non-governmental sectors.
  - The measure is financed in the amount of 400,000 EUR in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

### Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

The Implementation Plan for the Period 2016–2017 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2016 in 2017](#)) and The Implementation Plan for the Period 2018–2019 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2018 in 2019](#)) of the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 (**Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mlade 2013–2022**) enlists the following measures:

- Target support for projects involving young people from minority communities and other vulnerable groups
  - Projects enable young people to actively participate in the development of minority cultures, which strengthens their involvement and contributes to the very development of the cultures of their communities.
  - The measure is financed in the amount of 80,000 EUR in 2016 and 2017 and in the amount of 60,000 EUR (from the budget of the RS) in 2018 and 2019 (additional funds from the EU programme European Social Fund are expected).

## 8.10 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

In September 2020, the Government adopted the Implementation Plan for the Period 2020–2021 of the Resolution on the National Youth Programme 2013–2022 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022 za leti 2020 in 2021](#)). The Implementation Plan does not contain any measure (project, public tender or policy) in the field of culture and creativity. Therefore, no funds are provided for this field.

### Ongoing debates

A Resolution on the 2018–2025 National Programme for Culture was in preparation but was never adopted. Thus, Slovenia is currently without a valid strategic document in the field of culture. A new Resolution on the 2020–2027 National Programme for Culture was also in preparation, but as well unsuccessfully. The National Programme for Culture 2021–2028 ([Nacionalni program za kulturo 2021–2028](#)) is currently under preparation.

The Draft of Strategy of Design (Osnetek strategije s področja oblikovanja) was also in preparation, but was never adopted. The current status of the validity of the strategy is unknown; the draft is no longer available on the website of the Ministry of Culture. Nor is there yet news about whether or not the strategy is planning to be adopted or not. The strategy foresees measures for youth in the field of education, as it aims for improvement of competences in design.

## 9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

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The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) addresses mainly structured dialogue, which is intended to ensure a timely and effective contribution of young people to the formulation of public policies that concern them.

Article 8 of the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act determines Council of the Government of Republic of Slovenia for Youth as a consultative body to assist with decision-making on matters of youth and youth sector.

UN Youth Delegate is a voice of young people from Slovenia in the UN. The annual participation of a youth delegate at the UN makes it possible for a delegate (and youth) to exchange views with other youth delegates, as well as with representatives of states and decision-makers at the international level. The Human rights sector of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs meets several times with a delegate in the framework of preparations for participation at international forums.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia also participates in events, where it seeks to promote knowledge and understanding of global issues among young people.

## 9.1 General context

### Main concepts

The National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mlade 2013–2022](#)) aims to support and foster the participation and representation of young women and men (see 6.2.1, priority sub-field 3: *encouraging and strengthening of permanent mechanisms for consultation with young people*). The programme mainly addresses structured dialogue in an attempt to ensure timely and effective contributions on the part of young people to the formulation of public policies that concern them. Young people should increase their awareness so that they can actively influence the shaping of public policies in the EU. Young people should also become aware of their joint ownership of the European idea.

Consequently, the main concepts of this program are in accordance with the new European Union's notion of 'structured dialogue'.

Slovenia made significant steps in establishing a national youth policy after joining the European Union. In 2010, the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act ([Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#)) was adopted, which established key youth policy definitions and provided the basis for the adoption of the National Programme for Youth.

### Youth interest in global issues

There have been no recent studies of young people's interest or participation in global issues.

A youth dialogue event was held with decision makers in November of 2016 ([Dialog mladih s premierjem](#)). This event included young people and the former Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr. Miro Cerar. The conference program was based on concrete proposals and measures in support of the "For social changes" ([Za družbene spremembe](#)) movement, specifically three key areas of the 5th Structured Dialogue cycle that promote a more tolerant environment:

- entrepreneurship and job creation
- youth employment
- enabling young people to participate in a diverse, integrated and inclusive Europe.

In Sustainable Development:

- Youth Association No Excuse Slovenia ([Mladinska zveza Brez Izgovora](#)) actively informs youth about the latest developments and events concerning sustainable development.

- The National Youth Council of Slovenia ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)) has published a brochure on sustainable development in relation to the Slovenian youth sector called Sustainable Development and Youth Organisations ([Trajnostni razvoj in mladinske organizacije](#)).

- The Youth Section of the United Nations Associations of Slovenia ([Društvo za Združene narode za Slovenijo](#)) unites young members (15–29 years) of UNAS and deals with UN topics that especially concern youth.

In Human Rights:

- For initiatives in informal learning, detailed information can be found in sub-section 9.4: Raising awareness about global issues, Informal Learning.

- Participation in the No Hate Speech Movement, which is coordinated by the National Youth Council of Slovenia and includes educational workshops on the topic of human rights and hate speech ([Mlad.si](#)).

In UN Millennium Development Goals:



- A public competition featuring contributions in the form of art work, photography, comic books or literary texts on the topic "Show the way to gender equality" ([Mlad.si](#)).
- Combating AIDS/HIV with annual Virus Project ([Projekt Virus](#)), which aims to increase the awareness of AIDS/HIV and is implemented by the Slovenian Medical Students' International Committee Ljubljana ([Društvo študentov medicine Slovenija](#)).
- The UN Youth Delegate ([Mladinski delegat OZN](#)) is a relatively new programme in Slovenia. The National Youth Council of Slovenia, in cooperation with the Office for Youth and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has coordinated this program since 2014. The UN Youth Delegate spreads the message of the work of the United Nations and acts as a voice for young people from Slovenia in the UN. At the international level, a delegate usually participates in the regular session of the UN General Assembly in New York and the Third Committee meeting dealing with social, humanitarian and cultural issues, and such a delegate can also be involved in other high-level meetings at the international level. In the course of a one-year mandate, the delegate accomplishes the following:
  - advocating, preparing and conducting workshops for young people.
  - preparing content articles regarding areas covered by the United Nations.
  - linking himself or herself with actors who are closely associated with the functioning of the organisation.

Furthermore, UN Youth Delegate also cooperates and works closely with Sector for Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where they offer help and support in the preparation for the UN General Assembly. Annual participation at the UN General Assembly in New York also enables for both Slovenia and Youth Delegate to communicate the views and positions of Slovenia, as well as exchange of views with other stakeholders and decision-makers of foreign governments.

## 9.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

Governmental authority:

- The [Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth](#) (Urad RS za mladino) is a public authority responsible for the realisation of public interests in the youth sector at the national level. Structured dialogue falls under the auspices of this office.

Public actors:

- The [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#), the home ministry of the Office of the RS for Youth, which is responsible for the majority of actions and policies regarding youth.
- The [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) (MFA), which represents Slovenia abroad and in international organisations, monitors international political and economic relations. MFA is responsible for the development of relations between Slovenia and other states and for international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

Non-public actors:

- [SLOGA](#), a platform for non-governmental, non-profit organizations working in international development cooperation, global education and humanitarian aid.
- The United Nations Association of Slovenia ([Društvo za Združene narode za Slovenijo](#)), a non-governmental organization that spreads the ideas and goals of the UN in Slovenia.
- No Excuse Slovenia ([Brez izgovora Slovenija](#)), a national youth organization that aims to encourage positive social change and the personal growth of young people. Through various projects, the organization promotes and advocates sustainable development, healthy lifestyles and active citizenship among young people.

- The National Youth Council of Slovenia ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)), an umbrella organization of youth organizations working at the national level and a member of the [European Youth Forum](#) since its origin in 1996.

The Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act ([Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#)), the main act regarding youth, determines the distribution of responsibilities regarding youth. Article 7 determines the jurisdiction of the administrative body responsible for youth, which helps represent the country in the bodies of the European Union and the Council of Europe, as well as globally, in matters relating to youth. Article 8 specifies the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth as a consultative body that should assist with decision-making on matters of youth and the youth sector.

The article also specifies this council's jurisdiction and tasks:

- Propose measures in the youth sector and monitor the realization of the interests of youth in other policies at the national level.
- Provide advice to the government and relevant ministries regarding proposals, initiatives and recommendations to strengthen the youth dimension in individual sectoral public policies.
- Encourage the participation of young people in various consultative and co-decision bodies at the national and local levels.

### **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

Evidence of cross-sectorial cooperation can be found on the webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the "Materials on development cooperation and global challenges for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools" tab, where the materials for classes are published. Education is under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. Children and youth in schools are encouraged to consider global developments and their consequences for the local environment.

As stated on the website: global challenges, such as climate change and poverty, require global responses.

The [Strategic framework for climate change adaptation](#) (Strateški okvir prilagajanja podnebnim spremembam) includes activities in the field of education, training and awareness raising.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is included one of the elective subjects in elementary school (Environmental education I, II and III) and represents the strategic development guideline for the education system, requiring a change in the paradigm of knowledge and values. The strategic framework is outcome of cooperation between the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

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

### **Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level**

Structured dialogue is the only integrated top-level programme that allows young people to exchange views regarding global issues with policy-makers at the domestic level. According to [mlad.si](#) the Youth Network MaMa, together with the National Youth Council of Slovenia, organised the 7<sup>th</sup> cycle of the structured dialogue, which began in January 2019. The cycle focuses on the future of work, challenges and opportunities for young people; addressing opportunities for young people through quality youth work and providing education and training for youth workers; and creating opportunities for young people in rural areas.

Several individual initiatives enable(d) young people to present their views, such as the following:

- A dialogue with the Vice President of the European Union, Frans Timmermans, on the future of the European union, as well as its integration and challenges ([mlad.si](http://mlad.si)).
- A dialogue with the European Commissioner, Violeta Bulc, on youth's perspective on future of the EU ([mlad.si](http://mlad.si)).
- A dialogue with the former Prime Minister, Dr. Miro Cerar, and the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, on youth and the future of the EU.

### **Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level**

Since 2014, every year, the [Slovenian youth delegate](#) to the UN has taken part in the session of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, which is dedicated to human rights topics.

The delegate participates regarding social development, and he or she appears together with the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Slovenia. The annual participation of a youth delegate at the UN during the autumn session of the General Assembly in New York allows this delegate to exchange views with other youth delegates, as well as with representatives of states and decision-makers at the international level.

Employees working in the human rights sector ([Sektor za človekove pravice](#)) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have contacts with the delegate during his or her preparations for participation in international forums.

Structured dialogue evolved as a method of working in consultation with young people to encourage their active participation in society.

- The National Youth Council of Slovenia guides the national preparatory process for the implementation of a structured dialogue at the EU level. This council is guided by the National Steering Committee, which is composed of representatives of the following:
  - the National Youth Council of Slovenia,
  - the [Youth Network MaMa](#),
  - the National Agency of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action ([Zavod MOVIT](#)),
  - the Office of RS for Youth,
  - the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
  - the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

The »Initiative.si« ([Pobuda.si](#)) online platform, created by the National Youth Council of Slovenia, supports initiatives at the EU level (see also [Chapter 5.4](#)).

## **9.4 Raising awareness about global issues**

### **Formal, non-formal and informal learning**

#### Formal learning

The goals of the Slovenian educational system as specified in the [Financing and Organisation of Education Act](#) include:

- educating for mutual tolerance,
- developing awareness of gender equality,
- respect for human diversity and mutual cooperation,

- respect for children's and human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- developing the skills needed to live in a democratic society,
- developing linguistic skills,
- educating for sustainable development and active participation in a democratic society including a deep understanding of and a responsible attitude to, oneself,
- one's health
- one's own and other cultures,
- the natural and social environment, and
- future generations.

In formal education, these issues are transmitted through different subjects, cross-curriculum and with different out-of-school and project activities.

On upper-secondary level of education, they are covered across different subjects – as a planned programme – through subjects, such as philosophy, sociology, history, geography and the mother tongue, whole-school activities, and a range of opportunities for students through their participation in the life of the school and local community.

At the upper-secondary level of education, global issues are divided into two subjects:

- History ([Zgodovina](#))
- Sociology ([Sociologija](#))

These topics are discussed using a cross-curricular approach because they intertwine with other subjects, such as biology (ecology).

The issues covered and their key concepts, which represent the main learning objectives, are as follows:

- Work, modern social organisations and leisure are envisaged in curricula of sociology (key concepts covered: the consequences of work flexibility for society and individuals, the consequences of long-term unemployment, changing attitudes toward work, international companies, women in management, satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work and total institutions).
- Social development and environmental issues are envisaged within curricula of sociology (key concepts covered: the development of modern science; the revolution in biotechnology, including its consequences, the possibilities of its use and abuse and ethical issues related to the development of biological science and technology; global warming and its consequences; the development of information science and technology and its impact on privacy, the protection of personal data, human rights and control; the environment and growth limits; resource depletion and pollution).
- Civil society movements and human rights are envisaged within the curricula of history (key concepts: civil society movements, non-governmental organizations, civil rights, human rights, tolerance, globalisation, the women's equality movement and women's right to vote).
- Migration is envisaged within the curricula of history (key concepts: migration, economic crisis, urbanisation, exploitation, globalisation, citizenship, multicultural society, the friction between cultures, tolerance and terrorism).
- Science and technology in the twentieth century are envisaged within the curricula of history (key concepts: technical progress, scientific development, post-industrial society, ecological issues, sustainable development, education and the development/underdevelopment of the world).
- Challenges of the contemporary world are envisaged within the curricula of sociology (key concepts: European integration and globalization, globalisation and anti-

globalisation movements, globalisation and the ecological crisis, new ecological and ethical views, migration flows in Europe, multiculturalism, inter-ethnic conflicts, biotechnology and information technology – opportunities and risks, the role of the media in global society and the impact of globalisation on the spheres of work, family, identity, migration, self-reliance, health, the body, disease, education and problems of modern urbanisation).

In terms of recommended teaching time, history represents 30-40% of the total time. Sociology addresses global issues as a coherent topic. The average time devoted to each issue results in a total teaching time of roughly 30 hours. A certified cross-curricular program regarding environmental education ([Okoljska vzgoja](#)) helps provide education and training regarding sustainable development.

The National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) promotes a holistic understanding of sustainable development, with an emphasis on the transition to a low-carbon society (see Priority subsection 14):

- Indicator 1: the systematic introduction of content on sustainable development into the national curriculum
- Indicator 2: the share of programmes and projects regarding sustainable development as compared to all programmes and projects regarding youth
- Indicator 3: public opinion polls about environmental awareness among young people

#### Non-formal learning

[The Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) publishes [public call](#) for proposals for non-governmental organisations in the field of awareness raising in development cooperation and global education. Tenders are usually published cyclically to ensure the continuity of project implementation in a particular area. The last tender for one three-year project (2020–2022) among non-governmental organisations regarding development and humanitarian projects was published in 2019, [The Ministry](#) allocates up to EUR 1,515,000 for financing in the period from 2020 to 2022.

The two subjects of the tender are as mentioned international development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

They are described in the tender as follows:

- With the international development cooperation, the country contributes in a more balanced global development, eradicates poverty and realizes sustainable development.
- The goal of the humanitarian aid is to save human lives, prevent human suffering and preserve human dignity. Prevention of humanitarian catastrophes are also included, as well as building the capacities to ensure adequate responses to them. This goal also includes activities related to rehabilitation and reconstruction after crisis.
- Global education has an important role in the process of poverty elimination, achieving sustainable development and it contributes to understanding of global issues, their causes and consequences as well as the connections between local and global dimension.

#### Educator support

Support for educators is usually provided within a given project (for example, the [Program NEON](#)). However, some guidelines and handbooks can be found on website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (e.g. [With global learning towards global goals](#)).

From the perspective of international development cooperation, the area of global education is defined in the [Resolution on the International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (2017), highlighting its role in eliminating poverty and achieving sustainable development. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport defines this field in the Guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development from Pre-primary to Tertiary Education (2007) and some other documents.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is actively involved in the Global Education Network Europe – GENE. In April 2018, a Memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and GENE was signed. The Memorandum defined three main activities which are being held in 2018 with the financial and professional support of GENE: (i) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, GENE and other partners had held [National Forum on Global Education](#) and Education for Sustainable Development; (ii) the project on Global education "[Global responsibility for the future](#)" has started brought together different stakeholders, such as institution, NGOs and private sector; (iii) the mapping of global education and education for sustainable education in Slovenian schools which is being implemented by the National Institute for Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

We are Only With Others ("[Le z drugimi smo](#)") is a project (2016-2021) implemented with the support from the European Social Fund, to enhance social and citizenship competencies of the professional staff in education, including themes, such as respect for human rights and freedoms, solidarity and volunteer work, prevention of unhealthy lifestyles of young people.

### Informal Learning

I Write for Rights ([Pišem za pravice](#)).

- Organisation in charge: [Amnesty International Slovenia](#).
- An annual project that usually takes place in November and December, providing support for people who are wrongly imprisoned, tortured, intimidated or victims of discrimination and other human rights violations.
- Target groups: children, youth and the general public.
- More than 50 primary school and high school institutions have participated in this project. The project is largely financed by Amnesty International's own funds (funds obtained from members and supporters). However, it is co-financed by the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, the Youth Office of the Municipality of Ljubljana and the Norwegian section Amnesty International within the 'Empowerment of Tolerance' project. The funds obtained from the co-financers are mainly intended to help in the preparation, printing and distribution of educational and support materials for students and teachers. This year, Amnesty International Slovenia is expected to spend 13.000 EUR on this project (the cost is approximately the same every year).

## **Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia (MFA) participates in events (e.g. the [Cultural Bazaar](#)) at which it seeks to promote the knowledge and understanding of global issues among young people. In 2017, the MFA participated in the Cultural Bazaar panel entitled 'On children's rights through culture' and interactive workshops that addressed teachers and students regarding the impact of individual actions at the global level, the importance of international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance and the achievement of the goals of sustainable development. In last few years MFA also participates in the school competition "Europe in School" which is coordinated by one of the Slovenian NGO. MFA tries to introduce global issues and sustainable development goals as the key topic of the competition and therefore encourage the understanding of these topics among youth. In the framework of this competition, this year MFA participated at the conference regarding gender equality (SDG5), which was organised by [Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities](#).

In May 2018 the MFA participated in a public awareness event "[Her World is Our World](#)", which was held in European Union member states. The main objective of the event was to educate young people about work in the EU and its member states in the area of gender equality in developing countries.

## Global education ([Globalno učenje](#))

- Global education includes a set of principles for the education of various parts of society, as well as content that relates to an individual's role in society and interdependence with and engagement in global developments such as human rights, the environment and sustainable development, education for peace and conflict prevention, intercultural education, social justice, global citizenship and inequality. The goal of the Global education is to emphasise these interconnections and explain the causes and consequences of local and global issues and challenges and specially to encourage the citizenship to act.
- Through global education, citizens are transformed into responsible citizens of the world who understand and meet their responsibilities toward themselves, others and the environment. Global education promotes the independent work of young people regarding children's and human rights, a clean and safe environment, sustainable development, peace education, the prevention of peer violence and equality.
- By gaining informal competences within the framework of global education projects, children and young people are directed, supported and encouraged to actively participate in social events, especially in youth or voluntary organisations.
- In 2016 the MFA financed one two-year project on global education "[NGO Consortium: Global Education for Global Goals!](#)« and one on awareness raising "[STAND UP, TAKE ACTION: For the Future We Want](#)«.
- The Ministry of Public Administration and the EU co-finance [global learning projects](#) implemented by the [Humanitas Association](#) (together with international partners), the leading organisation in the field of global education in Slovenia. The main aim of the project "PeerAct - Upscaling peer-to-peer anti-bias education for promoting common values" is to equip young people with social competences to promote the fundamental social values of non-discrimination, tolerance, solidarity and equality among young people across Europe. The project runs from 2020 with an expected completion in 2022. The main aim of the project "Let's spread solidarity!" is to raise young people's awareness on the issues of solidarity, poverty, inequality, discrimination and human rights. The project runs from 2020 and is expected to end in 2023. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EU are co-financing the Humanitas Association CULPEER4CHANGE international project, which aims to promote global learning about the sustainable development goals (climate change, children's rights and migration) and to introduce new educational concepts into formal and non-formal education. The MFA and the EU are also co-financing the project "GLOBAL CHALLENGES - GLOBAL SUBJECTS", which aims to contribute to the visibility and quality of global learning in the formal school system and to stimulate debate on the importance of introducing a global dimension in teaching. The project ran from 2017 to 2021. Both Ministries and the EU co-financed the project "Beyond the Bubble", which sought to raise the visibility of the global learning approach and awareness of the shared responsibility for a Europe of solidarity, inclusion and openness in the world.

## Information providers

There are several public authorities responsible for the dissemination of information on global issues to young people:

- The [Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth](#) (Urad RS za mladino) disseminates information about projects targeted specifically toward youth.
- The [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#) disseminates information about educational projects.
- The [Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning](#) disseminates information about projects regarding the environment and climate change.

- The [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) disseminates information about projects regarding global education, awareness raising on global issues and fundamental/human rights.
- The [Ministry of Economic Development and Technology](#) disseminates information about projects regarding sustainable development and green production.

## Key initiatives

The National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) envisions several priority measures and their indicators:

### **Objective: Promoting a sustainable method of social action, focusing on the transition to a low-carbon society and the green economy**

Priority subsection 13 explains the need to promote an understanding of the changes that affect the functioning of the global ecosystem, as well as an awareness of the importance of sustainable environmental performance.

- The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning created the measure.
- Indicator 1: the number of comments and suggestions for changes made by youth representatives. This number was 0 within Slovenia's Plan B network (a network of non-governmental organizations for sustainable development).
- Indicator 2: a measurement of the environmental awareness of young people through public opinion research
- Indicator 3: the share of schools that implement sustainable development programs and/or projects
- Indicator 4: the number of non-governmental organizations in the youth sector that participated in sustainable development projects. Three NGOs in the youth sector participated in Slovenia's Plan B, namely the No Excuse Slovenia Youth Association, the Pina Cultural Educational Association and the Koper Education Institute.

Other key initiatives:

Transition to the green economy ([Prehod v zeleno gospodarstvo](#))

- Create a long-term governmental strategic direction.
- Establish a change in the patterns of consumption and production, one of the key conditions for a successful transition to the green economy. Change in the lifestyles of wider society to increase environmental sustainability is possible only with the appropriate educational measures.
- Ministries, knowledge institutes and competence centres must prepare renewed educational programmes with an emphasis on acquiring skills, not just knowledge. Educational processes will include topics related to the green economy, and special attention must be paid to training for so-called green jobs. The transition to the green economy will also require a number of changes in educational methods. These will include the greening of the educational infrastructure by reducing its environmental impact, increased material and energy efficiency and the introduction of sustainable lifestyles.

School of Human Rights ([Šola človekovih pravic](#))

- This project is conducted by Amnesty International Slovenia ([Amnesty Slovenija](#)).
- This project encourages learning about human rights.
- Schools all over Slovenia participate in various ways. For example, they participate in the I Write for Rights (Pišem za pravice) writing marathon at the Nights of the Book, and teachers themselves carry out workshops).

The Volunteer of the Year ([Prostovoljec leta](#))



- The project is implemented by the National Youth Council of Slovenia ([Mladinski svet Slovenije](#)).
- Over the years, the project and its open tender have developed a national dimension, rewarding volunteers and volunteer organisations for their contribution to society while encouraging others to become involved in volunteer activities.

Youth for climate justice ([Mladi za podnebno pravičnost](#))

- Youth for climate justice is a self-organized, democratic movement. The main aim of this movement is to provide decent living and take care of the Planet. The movement is in a non-violent way of fighting for usage of alternative sources of energy, raising awareness and searching for solutions to prevent the worsening of the climate crisis. Youth for climate change is connected to various groups fighting for the same rights, through organizing workshops and lectures, cultural interventions and protests.

[Climate of Change: End Climate Change, Start Climate of Change](#)

- The project aims to raise awareness among European youth about climate change-driven migration. The project is implemented by 15 European organisations (the [SLOGA Platform from Slovenia](#)) and is co-funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and EU DEAR Programme. The programme started in 2020 and will last for 40 months.

## 9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption

### Green volunteering

»Cleanup Slovenia« ([Očistimo Slovenijo](#)) is a national voluntary clean-up campaign that was implemented three times (most recently in 2018). The project was part of the global initiative [World Cleanup Day](#) and draws attention to the fact that environmental challenges need everyone's immediate attention. The global project aimed to unite 5% of the population from 150 countries in the world's largest clean-up action.

The [Eco School Programme](#) is comprised of several projects and initiatives that promote green volunteering, such as the following:

- Eco-package ([Eko-paket](#)) encourages the proper handling of waste packaging for milk and juices, especially among young people, their teachers and their parents.
- Reducing the carbon footprint of an individual, classroom or school ([Ekošola meri odtis CO2](#)) – in this Eco School project the main aim is primary, secondary, highschool students to learn about their impact on climate change while calculating the carbon footprints of an individual, the class or the institution. This is done through the CO2 calculator.
- Climate change and biodiversity ([Podnebne spremembe in biotska pestrost](#)) – is devoted for children in primary and secondary school to acknowledge climate change, the flora and the fauna and their interdependence. Various weather phenomena are presented thus the positive and negative effects on climate, animal species and everyday life.
- Circular Economy and the Design Challenge ([Krožno gospodarstvo in oblikovalski izziv](#)) – this project discusses the transition to a greener and low-carbon society on a national and global level. Pupils of the third triad of primary school, high school students and students with mentors study the circularity (life cycle) of individual products, design circular solutions and products, organize circular events, etc.
- Don't Throw the Clothes, Save the Planet! ([Ne zavrži oblek, ohrani planet!](#)) – this project is directed towards the responsible handling of used clothes – reuse, reduce and recycle. We Give Waste A New Life! ([Odpadkom dajemo novo življenje](#)) – children and young people learn how to separate and collect waste. An important point is raising awareness and education about the packaging waste connected to our everyday life.

- Knowledge of Forests ([Znanje o gozdovih](#)) is a programme aimed at reconnecting people with their forest heritage. It encourages adolescents to regain their sense of connection with the environment and also encourages the idea that our forests are a natural asset that we must value and protect for future generations.

## Green production and consumption

The Eco School Programme is comprised of several projects and initiatives that promote green production and consumption, such as following:

- The Eco Quiz for Elementary Schools ([Ekokviz za osnovne šole](#)) is school competition regarding the knowledge of environmental and ecological concepts. It focuses on specific topics and issues each year.
- The Eco Quiz for High Schools ([Ekokviz za srednje šole](#)) operates similarly.
- Mission: Green Steps ([Misija: Zeleni koraki](#)) is a competition promoting creativity among young people regarding sustainable development, particularly green mobility. Young people are involved in creating artworks and promoting sustainable modes of transport.
- Food is Not for Waste ([Hrana ni za tjavendan](#)) is a project that aims to reduce and the production of discarded food at home and school, encourage the practical use of unused food, show the correct way of storing food products, encourage the proper recycling and disposal of food residues, increase awareness of responsible food management and strengthen education regarding responsible food management and discarded food.
- The [AlterMed](#) Fair emphasises attitudes toward health, specifically the notion that we 'experience' health and perceive it as a source of value.
- Young Reporters ([Mladi poročevalci za okolje](#)) is a project that aims to report on the environmental challenges in the local environment and proactively seek solutions to these challenges. The Young Reporters project has had a significant impact on changing behaviours in light of modern environmental challenges.
- School Garden Classroom ([Šolska vrtilnica](#)) is a project that aims to foster the development of skills and knowledge that are crucial for effective sustainable development in the twenty-first century).

## 9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

### Intercontinental youth work cooperation

One of the aims defined in Chapter 6.2.3 of the 2020-2021 Implementation plan ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2020 in 2021](#)) for the National programme for Youth 2013–2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) is *Promoting inclusion in and support for youth work and learning mobility in youth work* (Spodbujanje vključevanja v mednarodno mladinsko delo in učnih mobilnosti v mladinskem delu ter njihova krepitev).

The first important objective of the 2020/2021 Implementation plan is the 2.2.2 Objective - To increase the international (study) mobility of young people, especially youth coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Scholarships for international mobility of students raise the quality of international education, enables students to gain more competences and at the same time raise employability of the participants with complementary financing of mobility under the Erasmus+ programme.

The holders of this objective and the budget user are the [Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#) (Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport) and [Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities](#) (Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti).

Amount of financial resources provided in 2020 and 2021: 2020 - 954.850 EUR, 2021 - /.

## Development cooperation activities

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has launched a Call for Proposals for the implementation of international development projects and strategic partnerships in the field of international humanitarian aid for the period 2021-2023 ([Javni razpis za izvajanje mednarodnih razvojnih projektov in strateško partnerstvo na področju mednarodne humanitarne pomoči v obdobju od 2021 do 2023](#)). The aim of international development projects is to contribute to the eradication of poverty, the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of sustainable development in the social, economic and environmental fields in the partner countries. The aim of humanitarian aid is to save human lives, prevent and alleviate human suffering and preserve human dignity. The subject of the call for proposals is divided into four strands. The target group for Strand A (Development project in sub-Saharan Africa - Sustainable water management in response to covid-19) includes young people, especially those from the most vulnerable social groups and those disadvantaged by ethnic and/or religious origin, location of residence (rural areas, poor urban areas), etc. In Strand B (Development project in Belarus - development of democracy and economic opportunities), the target group includes young people and young entrepreneurs.

[Voluntariat Institute](#) encourages international volunteering in less developed countries through which volunteers gain insight and understanding of development issues that people of the Global South face every day. While living in a developing country, the volunteers join the local communities and do voluntary work. Programmes are designed for volunteers that are 21 years old or over, with previous experience in volunteering or with distinct motivation, and commitment to active participation on a global level.

## 9.7 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

No forthcoming policy developments.

### Ongoing debates

At the end of 2018, the Government adopted the Strategy for International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Republic of Slovenia until 2030 ([Strategija mednarodnega razvojnega sodelovanja in humanitarne pomoči Republike Slovenije do leta 2030](#)), which focuses on empowering women and young people and on promoting employment opportunities (including entrepreneurship) for women and young people in partner countries. It seeks to strengthen the perspective of young people in the Western Balkan countries and to contribute to better education for young people in the partner countries. In the longer term, it aims to deepen young people's understanding of the importance of international development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

## 10. YOUTH WORK

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Youth work tradition in Slovenia started approximately with Slovenian independence in 1991. Before 1991, Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia and "within this context there was a relatively strong youth movement, which helped form the basis later on for the development of youth work. An overview of youth work history in Slovenia can be found in the publication "Youth work in Slovenia from liberation to independence" ([Mladinsko delo v Sloveniji od osvoboditve do osamosvojitve](#)).

In 2010, Slovenia saw the adoption by the government of the [Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act](#) (Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju). Article 3 provides a legal definition for youth work, combining formal and non-formal aspects of youth work. The

Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act identifies that the responsibility for governing the youth sector lies with the State, self-governing local communities and the self-governing national communities, where relevant (see Article 6). The Government of the Republic of Slovenia proposes a National Programme Youth for adoption by the National Assembly. This is the main document that forms youth policy agenda and specific policy measures in the field of youth work. Main national public authority is [the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#) and its autonomous body [The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth](#) (Urad Republike Slovenije za mladino).

There is no specific national youth strategy on youth work in Slovenia; the [Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act](#) provides youth work with a legal basis.

## 10.1 General context

### Historical developments

Youth work tradition in Slovenia started approximately with Slovenian independence in 1991. Before 1991, Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia and "within this context there was a relatively strong youth movement, which helped form the basis later on for the development of youth work."<sup>[1]</sup> In the early 1970s, Slovenia was characterized by increased repression and ideological pressure on young people, especially the youth press and the media, which led to student revolts and led to the formulation of civil society movements and the development of a strong youth scene. During this time, the independent student organisation was abolished and merged with the youth organisation. Later in the 1980s came an intensive period for youth movements (formal and non-formal) which continued in the 1990s, when youth scenes began to develop, mostly designing around key leisure activities of young people. Young people became increasingly involved in various movements and organisations. In the process of transition, young people wanted especially the least risky path to the future, which led to the development of several forms of working with youth or youth work. The activities took place in public gatherings where young people were involved in the action.

An overview of youth work history in Slovenia can be found in the publication "Youth work in Slovenia from liberation to independence" ([Mladinsko delo v Sloveniji od osvoboditve do osamosvojitve](#)).

After independence, the concepts of working with and for young people began to develop and there was an incentive to design a youth programme at national and the European level. "A formal approach to youth policy and support for youth work began in 1990, with the establishment of the National Youth Council. This was developed further through the work of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth by the Ministry of Education and Sport."<sup>[2]</sup> Moreover, youth work at the local level quickly developed, which included development of new local youth organisations, local youth councils and youth centres.

After the access to the European Union in 2004, policy frameworks and European youth work programmes gave an important contribution and complemented the programmes used by the Office for Youth to promote youth policies and youth work. The [Youth Council Act](#), adopted in 2000, led to the establishment of many local youth councils. The turning point came in 2005, when the Office for Youth published the Strategy of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth in the field of youth policy until 2010 (Strategija Urada RS za mladino na področju mladinske politike do leta 2010). The Strategy's aim was to improve the conditions for performing youth work and to recognise youth work more generally.<sup>[3]</sup>

Growth in funding and financial support to youth centres has strengthened the commitment to the development of youth work on both, national and local levels. Consolidation of the development of youth work and expansion of the youth sector enabled the introduction of legislation in 2010 ([Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act](#)). The Act

also provided the formal legal basis for the preparation of the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)).

“Overall, there have been a number of identifiable phases in the development of youth work in Slovenia, beginning with a focus on participation of young people, followed by a focus on preventive and/or therapeutic youth work, with most recently a focus on the competences as defined by EU priorities.”<sup>[4]</sup> Lately, we have seen a general decline in youth work that delivers leisure activities, with more focus on active citizenship. The majority of youth work in Slovenia is delivered through (national) youth organizations and non-governmental organizations, working in the field of youth at the national level.<sup>[5]</sup>

## National definition or understanding of Youth Work

In 2010, Slovenia saw the adoption by the government of the [Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act](#) (Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju). Article 3 provides a legal definition for youth work, combining formal and non-formal aspects of youth work:

*“youth work is an organised and target-oriented form of youth action and is for the youth, within which the youth, based on their own efforts, contribute to their own inclusion in society, strengthen their competences and contribute to the development of the community. The implementation of various forms of youth work is based on the volunteer participation of the youth regardless of their interest, cultural, principle or political orientation”.*

Prior to the adoption of the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act, Slovenia did not have any national legislation relating to youth work nor a central definition of youth work, which led to the proliferation of a range of definitions in existence across Slovenia with many youth organisations often using their own definitions. Nowadays, main actors agree that the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act is their legal basis.

<sup>[1]</sup> Ule et al. in Skrinar, U., 2014. *Working with young people: The value of youth work. Country report: Slovenia*. Brussels: Directorate-General for Education and Culture (last accessed 13/09/2019) (see p. 5).

<sup>[2]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[3]</sup> See Pazlar, N., 2009. *Profil mladinskega delavca v Sloveniji danes in v prihodnosti*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede (last accessed 15/09/2019) (see p. 21–22).

<sup>[4]</sup> Skrinar, U., 2014. *Working with young people: The value of youth work. Country report: Slovenia*. Brussels: Directorate-General for Education and Culture (last accessed 13/09/2019).

<sup>[5]</sup> For information on historical developments of youth work in Slovenia, see also: Pazlar, N., 2009. *Profil mladinskega delavca v Sloveniji danes in v prihodnosti*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede (last accessed 15/09/2019) (see p. 21–22); Skrinar, U., 2014. *Working with young people: The value of youth work. Country report: Slovenia*. Brussels: Directorate-General for Education and Culture (last accessed 13/09/2019).

## 10.2 Administration and governance of youth work

### Governance

#### Main actors

The [Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act](#) identifies that the responsibility for governing the youth sector lies with the State, self-governing local communities and the self-governing national communities, where relevant (see Article 6).

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia proposes a National Programme for Youth for adoption by the National Assembly. This is the main document that forms youth policy agenda and specific policy measures in the field of youth work. Main national public

authority is [the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport](#) and it's autonomous body [The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth](#) (Urad Republike Slovenije za mladino).

National public authorities/actors are:

- [The Office for Youth](#) is an administrative body responsible for youth (see Article 6 and 7 of the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act). Operating since 1991, it champions the interests of the youth and the youth sector. The Office for Youth is a state authority in the field of youth work, shaping youth policies in a relatively independent manner, including by providing financial support for youth programmes and promoting research on youth. It mainly focuses on promoting youth work, coordinating measures within youth policy and ensuring adequate social dialogue with young people. The Office has been co-funding youth work programmes since its beginnings.
- The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth ([Svet Vlade Republike Slovenije za mladino](#)) was established in 2009 by the Slovenian government to serve as a consultative body. Article 8 of the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act states, that the Council for Youth "*shall offer assistance in making decisions on matters in the field of youth and the youth sector*". It also considers proposed laws and other regulations and measures of the Government relating to the area of youth work. The Office for Youth coordinates works for Council (for more information on the Council, see Youth Wiki section [5.3 Youth representation bodies](#)).

Other actors involved:

- Institute for the development of youth mobility ([Zavod MOVIT](#)), performs tasks of the national agency for the European Union programme Erasmus+: Youth in Action. MOVIT manages indirectly centralized EU budget funds and provides support for various forms of learning mobility in youth work and enhances solidarity at local, national and European level, while carrying out activities for the general development of youth work and non- formal learning. An important part of MOVIT's activity is also the publicity, through which some of the basic works for the development of youth work, especially learning mobility in youth work, were created.
- [The National Youth Council of Slovenia](#) (Mladinski svet Slovenije) is an umbrella organisation of national youth organisations operating at the national level. The mission of the Youth Council of Slovenia and local community youth councils is to represent the interests of member youth organisations. Their main activities are creating youth policies, conducting dialogue throughout the non-governmental youth field, encouraging the development of youth work and non-formal education, and other youth activities that support the development of youth initiatives and youth organisations. The National Youth Council of Slovenia has [11 full member organisations and two associated member organisations](#) (September 2021).
- [Youth Network MaMa](#) (Mladinska mreža MaMa) combines and represents organisations that run youth centres or are active in youth work in Slovenia in order to support the youth, their spending of quality free time and a better life in society. MaMa also provides non- formal education for youth and youth workers. Currently it has 50 members with the status of a youth centre. At local level, youth centres are important agents in promoting youth work.
- Youth organisations and organisations for youth: the entities of public interest in the youth sector are youth organisations and organisations for youth. In order to obtain the status of an organisation in the public interest in the youth sector, organisations in the youth sector must meet the following conditions, one of which is to meet important achievements in the development and integration of youth work (see the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act, Article 9 and Article 11).
- Institute Nefiks ([Zavod Nefiks](#)) promotes non-formal learning and the recognition of skills gained through non-formal learning activities.

- [The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training](#) (Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje) is the central Slovenian institution dealing with development, research and counselling regarding vocational and technical education. The qualification standard for a youth worker (national vocational qualification) was adopted by the Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (for more information see Youth Wiki section [10.5 Youth workers](#)).

### Distribution of responsibilities

There is no regional public authority in Slovenia. The bodies of self-governing local communities are responsible for implementing the public interest in the youth sector at a local level (see Article 6 of the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act). The [Constitution](#) of the Republic of Slovenia defines municipalities as local self-governed communities.

Youth councils of local communities are holders of youth work and youth policy, and furthermore are the entities of public interest in the youth sector at the local level. Youth centres are seen as the main drivers of youth work at the local level. Level of support for youth work varies from municipality to municipality: in some local communities, there is a very high level of recognition and support for youth work (see also [report](#) on youth work in Slovenia). Since most local communities do not have a youth office, the cooperation with local authorities and youth centres is very important. Main actors on the local level are:

- The Youth Council of Local Communities ([Mladinski sveti lokalnih skupnosti](#)) is the umbrella association of youth organisations at the local level, which represents the interests of young people and youth organisations relation to municipal authorities and all other institutions. The Youth Council of Local Communities also organizes trainings and other community events for young people or youth organisations.
- Youth departments within the city administrations, for example the municipality of Ljubljana ([Urad za mladino](#)) and the municipality of Maribor ([Urad za kulturo in mladino](#)) have their own offices for youth. The departments usually coordinate leisure activities in the field of youth work, promote activities and opportunities offered by public institutes operating in the youth sector. However, most local communities do not have specific youth office nor person for youth issues.

### Cross-sectoral cooperation

A range of public authorities hold overall responsibility for youth policy and governance. The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth is governmentally designated consultative body, where ministries cooperate on a wide range of issues, depending on the subject matter. In this way, cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation is the responsibility of and coordinated by the Council of the Government for Youth. The Council has a president and 19 members, appointed by the principle of bipartite composition (balance between the government and the youth sector). The representatives of the Government are: Minister of Education, Science and Sport as the President, and one representative from the following ministries: the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of

Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Public Administration, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, the Office of the Prime Minister, the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, and the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

Cross-sectoral cooperation is essential to address the challenges young people face. The co-operation of major actors across sectors is usually project-based, as systemic cooperation would require continuous funding. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (and its body The Office for Youth) is not covering all youth issues. It cooperates with other ministries on the topics of:

- youth work that increases the employability of young people; social youth work: with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities;

- youth work and culture in the youth centres: with the Ministry of Culture; youth work and volunteering: with the Ministry of Public Administration;
- youth work and youth cooperatives with the status of social enterprises: with the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology;
- youth work and young farmers: with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food.

## 10.3 Support to youth work

### Policy/legal framework

There is no specific national youth strategy on youth work in Slovenia; the [Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act](#) provides youth work with a legal basis.

#### Main objectives and principles

The Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act states that the public interest in the area of the youth sector shall be implemented by providing regulatory and other conditions for developing the fields of youth work and inclusion of the youth aspect in strategies, policies and measures affecting youth (see Article 5). In accordance with the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act, the National Programme for Youth as the fundamental programme document defines the priorities and measures that are in the public interest in the youth sector. The objectives and priorities of the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022](#)) are clustered into six domains. There is no separate domain/section on youth work, however, youth work is mentioned in the section 6: "Youth and society and the importance of the youth sector". Several objectives of the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 include reference to youth work:

- **6.2.2 objective:** *"Promoting the establishment and development of organisations in the youth sector, developing key areas of the youth sector and ensuring the functioning of disorganized youth"* (Criterion: Increase in the number of organisations in the youth sector applying to tender for co-financing youth work; Expected development impact: improving the functioning of the youth sector and increased participation of young people in the management of social affairs)

Priority subsection 8: "Creating capacities for quality youth work and establishing a national training and education system for youth workers and youth leaders".

- Measure operator: The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth
- Participants: youth sector, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, National Education Institute Slovenia, local communities
- Financial plan: funding is/will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia and the budget of local communities
- Period and time limits: until 2022
- Assessment indicators:
  - number of persons who acquire a qualification for a youth worker by education or part of programmes of higher education institutions, by gender;
  - established national training system for youth workers and youth leaders.

The National Youth Programme divides capacity building for quality youth work into four areas:

1. *Ensuring that the professional profile of the youth worker is formalized* (Youth work helps young people to develop their skills and talents, especially in the field of extracurricular activities. It is necessary to regulate the field of youth work and formalize the profile of the youth worker, in particular, to develop models of formal



and non-formal education for youth workers in Slovenia, as well as the elective subject "youth work" in secondary education)

2. *Promoting active citizenship,*
  3. *Development of local youth policies, and*
  4. *Promoting youth work* (It is necessary to ensure the development of a communication strategy for the promotion of organisations in the field of youth work and their activities, and the reputation of youth work and youth activities, among both young people and the rest of the public, with an emphasis on employers).
- 6.2.3 objective: "Promoting and strengthening the involvement in international youth work and learning mobility in youth work" (Criterion: Increase in the number of participants in youth mobility schemes in the youth sector; Expected development impact: enhanced mobility of young people within the youth sector)

Priority subsection 10: "Promoting mobility in the youth sector".

- Measure operator: The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth
- Participants: Institute for the development of youth mobility (MOVIT), the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Financial plan: funding is/will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia
- Period and time limits: until 2022
- Assessment indicators:
  - number of young people enrolled in non-formal education mobility programmes;
  - number of national schemes to promote international cooperation in the youth sector and to promote learning mobility in youth work with individual countries or individual target groups of young people;
  - number of national youth organisations (or more actors) who are members of European and international youth associations;
  - number and volume of guest appearances of umbrella organisations of Slovenian youth organisations in Slovenia;
  - number of municipalities that have measures to encourage youth participation with twinned (partner) municipalities in other countries;
  - number of programmes encouraging local units to become involved in international youth work and the implementation of learning mobility by national youth organisations;
  - number of international training activities in the field of youth work in Slovenia;
  - number of youth leaders and workers who participated in such trainings (either in Slovenia or abroad) in a given year.
- 6.2.4 objective: "Strengthening the research and analysis segment in the youth field" (Criterion: the existence of an organisation that considers youth research as a core activity; Expected development impact: ensuring long-term and stable youth research)

Priority subsection 11: "Establishment of a national youth research organisation".

- Measure operator: The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth
- Financial plan: funding is/will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia
- Period and time limits: until 2022

- Assessment indicators:
  - establishment of a unit for youth research (within existing research organisations);
  - number of analyses and surveys that analyse and substantively evaluate the impact of international youth work and learning mobility in youth work.

The focus of section 6 is therefore on promoting the establishment and development of organisations in the youth sector, on promoting and strengthening the involvement in international youth work and learning mobility in youth work, and on strengthening the research and analysis segment in the youth field (also youth work research).

A reference to youth work is also made in section 2: "Education" of the National Youth Programme 2013-2022:

- 2.2.1 objective: "Improving the competence of young people" (Criterion: increase in youth employment rates; Expected development impact: ensuring young people to easier access the labour market)

Priority subsection 1: "Establish full recognition of non-formal forms of knowledge and experience and link formal and non-formal education".

- Measure operator: the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
- Participants: Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, youth sector, higher education institutions, social partners
- Financial plan: funding is/will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia
- Period and time limits: until 2022
- Assessment indicators:
  - putting the problem of non-recognition of non-formally acquired knowledge and skills on the political decision-making agenda;
  - introduction of the status of youth worker or youth leader in secondary schools and colleges (modelled on the status of athlete, status of cultural student);
  - taking into account the active participation in organisations in the youth sector as part of the compulsory elective content in schools

### **Youth work domains & general types of youth work activities**

The new definition of youth work in Slovenia as established through the Act on Public Interest in Youth Sector provides a framework for all youth organisations and organisations working with young people. The Act (Article 4) defines the areas of youth sector. Main sectors of youth work are:

- autonomy of youth – supporting young people in to independence
- non-formal learning and training and increasing the competences of youth;
- access of youth to the labour market and enterprise development of youth;
- care for youth with fewer opportunities in society;
- volunteering, solidarity and intergenerational participation of youth;
- mobility of youth and international integration;
- promotion of healthy lifestyle the prevention of various forms of youth dependencies;
- access of youth to cultural activities and the promotion of creativity and innovation among youth; and,
- participation of youth in managing public affairs in society.

Youth organisations and organisations working with young people are operating in all fields of youth work; with larger organisations focusing more on education, and smaller ones on leisure and cultural activities. At the local level, youth centres deliver a range of non-formal education activities including information and counselling services (see [report](#) on youth work in Slovenia). In the past years, youth work has mostly been done in the fields of participation and active citizenship. This is followed by the fields of non-formal education, social inclusion and employment. In recent years, youth work has also been increasingly recognized as a mean for supporting young people into employment. There has been an increase in prevention programmes and street-based youth work. Every second year the Office for Youth releases a public call for co-financing youth work programmes, which is the main funding resource of many organisations in the field of youth and thus shapes the themes addressed by the programmes of these organisations. In the 2016/2017 and in the 2018/2019 calls, the priority area of the call was a response to the refugee crisis, while in the latest [call](#) (2020/2021), the prioritized themes are hate speech, radicalization, integration, young people that are neither in employment nor in education or training and climate and environmental challenges.

### **Youth work providers**

The main youth work providers in Slovenia are organisations and NGOs working with youth. Youth organisations and organisations for youth are defined in the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act (Article 3): “youth organisation” as an autonomous, democratic, volunteer and independent association of youth, which through its operation enables youth to gain a planned learning experience, to form and express their viewpoints and implement their activities in accordance with their orientation in terms of special interests, culture, points of view or politics, and is organised as an independent legal entity, specifically as a society or an association of societies or as an integral part of another legal entity, namely a society, an association of societies, a trade union or a political party, provided that autonomy of operation in the youth sector has been ensured by the basic act of that legal entity. “Organisation for youth” is defined as a legal entity that implements a youth programme, but is not a youth organisation, and is organised as an institute, an institution or a cooperative.

The [Youth Council Act](#) states, that the National Youth Council of Slovenia and the local community youth councils implement or participate in the implementation of youth work and other activities in the field of the youth sector (see Article 5). Youth centres are seen as the main drivers of youth work at the local level. A youth centre is an organised functional centre for youth provided by the local community or other legal person of public or private law or a natural person, in which programmes in the youth sector and youth work are implemented at a local level. Youth centres shall provide for appropriate spatial conditions and equipment for implementing youth work and for the appropriate qualifications of personnel to support youth work, and participate in implementing youth mobility, volunteer youth work, active citizenship, youth research work and integration at an international level (see the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act, Article 28).

### **Targets of youth work**

The [Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act](#) (see Article 3) defines youth as “adolescents and young adults of both genders aged between 15 and an attained 29 years”. Since the adoption of the Act in 2010, this has formed the basis for defining the target group of youth work in Slovenia. No other group in the youth population is identified as primary target of youth work.

However, the Resolution of the National Programme for Youth 2013?2022 identifies the need to attend to youth with fewer opportunities in relation to scholarships, youth work and social inclusion. When defining its priorities, the Resolution (section 6 on social inclusion) particularly accentuates the position of youth with fewer opportunities facing social exclusion where individuals with disabilities and Roma youth are explicitly mentioned. “There are, of course, differences in target groups among different organisations. Firstly, it seems that non-formal youth organisations are membership based

such as Scouts; while (state funded) youth centres are primarily focused on open access universal provision. Other youth organisations also work to support specific vulnerable groups such as early school leavers or young people from the Roma community”<sup>[1]</sup>

## Funding

The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth has been co-funding youth work and youth work programmes since its beginnings. Since 2015, the Office for Youth publishes open funding calls for youth work programmes every second year (until then the call was published annually). Due to the financial crisis and cuts in the national budget, there was a decrease in 2012 of 10% in the annual budget (from 1.466.000,00 EUR to 1.280.000,00 EUR) for the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth in terms of co-financing youth work (see [report](#)). The tax privileges for youth work were also partly cut in 2012. The amount of money available for youth work programmes from 2012-2015 was 1.28 million EUR per year. The same amount was allocated in 2016. After years of recession and even declining funds, the state managed to secure an increase of the Office for Youth’s budget in 2018 and 2019 by 500.000,00 EUR, which also increased the co-financing of youth work programmes in 2018 and 2019 by 20%. In 2020/2021, the state again secured 2,9 million EUR (1,45 million EUR annually) for youth work programmes.

The Implementation plan for the period 2020/2021 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2020 in 2021](#)) for the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 consists of measures, financing and implementation of which is in the 2020 and 2021 budgets. The following objectives are funded according to the Implementation plan:

- 6.2.2 objective: "Promoting the establishment and development of organisations in the youth sector, developing key areas of the youth sector and ensuring the functioning of disorganized youth":
  1. Measure/instrument: Public call for co-financing youth work programmes in 2020 and 2021 [Javni poziv za sofinanciranje programov mladinskega dela v letih 2020 in 2021](#));
    - Measure operator: The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth;
    - Brief description: Conditions and criteria: youth work programmes in at least one area (or more) of the youth sector referred to in Article 4 of the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act will be co-financed;
    - Indicator(s): the amount of funding earmarked for organisations in the youth sector; the number of organisations in the youth sector applying to tender for co-financing youth work;
    - Amount of financial resources: 2020 – 179.687 EUR, 2021 – 179.687 EUR.
  2. Measure/instrument: Call for proposals "Strengthening the skills of young people through active citizenship to increase employability" ("[Krepitev kompetenc mladih skozi aktivno državljanstvo za večjo zaposljivost](#)").
    - Measure operator: The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth;
    - Brief description: Funding will be provided for trainings for young people that will be carried out by organisations in the youth sector in the framework of youth work. The aim is to involve young people in non-formal education and active citizenship processes, with a focus on improving their employability.
    - Indicator(s): the amount of funding from European sources for the development of the youth sector;
    - Amount of financial resources: 2020 – 1.133.135,83 EUR, 2021 – 875.603,40 EUR.

- 6.2.3 objective: "Promoting and strengthening the involvement in international youth work and learning mobility in youth work"

1. Measure/instrument: Co-financing the operation of the National Agency for the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme;

- Measure operator: The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth
- Brief description: Institute for the development of youth mobility (MOVIT) encourages international youth mobility, in particular through the various key actions of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme, and offers the opportunity to participate in international projects and trainings for youth leaders and youth workers;
- Indicator(s): number of young people enrolled in non-formal education mobility programmes; number of international training activities in the field of youth work taking place in Slovenia; number of youth leaders who have participated in such trainings (either in Slovenia or abroad) in a given year;
- Amount of financial resources: 2020 – 456.500 EUR, 2021 – 456.500 EUR.

Two measures help to promote and support youth work and learning mobility via the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme. Both measures are implemented by MOVIT, the National Agency for the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme. The timeframe for the measures is 2020. The first measure is aimed at supporting Key Action 1, Learning Mobility among individuals, which aims to provide opportunities for individuals to improve their skills, enhance their employability and gain a sense of cultural awareness.

1. *Erasmus+: Key action 1 (Mobility projects for young people and youth workers)*

Indicative amount of financial contribution provided, total: 2020: 1.809.157 EUR.

The second measure is aimed at supporting Key Action 2, Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices. This action seeks to enable organisations to work together in order to improve their provisions for learners and share innovative practices.

2. *Erasmus+: Key action 2 (Strategic Partnerships projects on the youth field)*

Indicative amount of financial contribution provided, total: 2020: 694.276 EUR.

Status of an organisation in the public interest in the youth sector is a precondition for a youth organisation to candidate for funding. In order to obtain the status, the organisations must meet the following conditions (see Article 11 of the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act):

- regular implementation of youth programmes or programmes for youth (hereinafter: programmes in the youth sector) in the fields referred to in Article 4 of the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act,
- important achievements in the development and integration of youth work, and
- appropriate material and personnel capacities for their operation.

Erasmus + and European Solidarity Corps support two target groups of young people: young people with fewer opportunities and young people with disabilities.

Measures of the National Programme for Youth cover the following fields: education, employment and entrepreneurship, housing, health and wellbeing, the social position of youth, the development of the youth sector, culture and creativity, heritage, media. Each ministry is responsible for its budget allocation for measures on national youth policy. Thus, organisations in the youth sector can receive funds based on the sectoral policy of each ministry. The ministries support different measures according to their field of work (e.g., health policy, employment policy). For example, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs implements and co-finances different programmes for the support of (social) youth work.

There is no analysis available of the proportion of public funding (of GDP) in Slovenia that is dedicated to youth work, either at the national or local level. At the local level, there is direct financing through calls for local youth organisations, although this is not the case in every municipality. There are also no systematic data available on local budgetary allocation for youth work.

There are also other funding possibilities, for example the European Social Fund. There were five public calls using European funds for youth sector only published in the period between 2009 and 2018.

1. European Social Fund (5 million EUR in 2018): The aim of the call was to support employment of young youth workers in the youth sector;
2. European Social Fund (5 million EUR in a period 2016-2018): The aim of the call was to support innovative ways of youth work and within it employability and employment of young people;
3. European Social Fund (0.8 million EUR in 2014): The aim of the call was to co-finance projects of non-governmental organisations in the youth sector to develop social and civic competences of young people;
4. European Social Fund (4 million EUR in a period 2010-2012): Four million euros were allocated through a special tender for establishing eight content networks bringing together youth organisations and external partners;
5. European Regional Development Fund (13 million EUR in the period between 2009-2011): There were ten new youth centres established in Slovenia by the end of 2011 with ERDF support.

## Cooperation

There is no special framework of cooperation between all youth work stakeholders in Slovenia.

The Youth Council of Slovenia is partly funded by the Office for Youth to connect stakeholders in the youth sector, primarily national youth organisations. The Office for Youth is organizing the "National conference of the youth sector" in cooperation with the Youth Council of Slovenia. The conference is designed to bring together the main actors in the youth sector once a year and to address the key topics, which the youth sector identifies. Therefore, the conference aims at youth workers and youth leaders, representatives of youth organisations and organisations for youth and anyone else who, in one way or another, co-creates and co-formulates youth fields, policies and programmes. In 2019, organisations were invited to present projects, tools, standards and activities on quality in youth work, as well as examples of good practice that could be shared with other organisations in the youth sector (see [Nacionalni posvet mladinskega sektorja 2019](#)). The 2020 conference focused on the topic of Space and participation for all (see [Nacionalni posvet mladinskega sektorja 2020](#)). The forthcoming consultation in December 2021 will look at the current state of the youth sector and develop strategic orientations (see [Nacionalni posvet mladinskega sektorja 2021](#)).

Within the framework of compulsory elective content in schools ([obvezne izbirne vsebine](#)) some youth centres cooperate with secondary schools, usually in the form of giving lectures on topics of citizenship education, hate speech, promoting youth centre and youth work etc.

In 2016, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology allocated funds and announced the Invitation to tender for the selection of operations to launch social enterprises and youth cooperatives in 2016-2018 ([Javni razpis za izbor operacij za zagon socialnih podjetij in mladinskih zadrug v letih 2016–2018](#)). The purpose of the invitation was to encourage the start-up of new social enterprises, to encourage the launching of entrepreneurial ventures in existing social enterprises and to encourage the launching of new youth cooperatives with the status of social enterprises. The indicative maximum amount of funding was almost 2 million EUR (1.907.824,86 EUR), of which 1.362.765,41

EUR for the start-up phase of social enterprises and 545.076,55 EUR for the start-up phase of youth cooperatives.

[1] Skrinar, U., 2014. *Working with young people: The value of youth work. Country report: Slovenia*. Brussels: Directorate-General for Education and Culture (last accessed 13/09/2019).

## 10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work

### Quality assurance

#### Main criteria/indicators/standards used to assess the quality of youth work projects/programmes

In Slovenia occupational standard 'Youth worker' ([Mladinski delavec/Mladinska delavka](#)) exists since 2017. The standard enables the official recognition of professional skills for a youth worker (for detailed description of the standard see section 10.5).

Particular quality assurance systems are also embedded in the public calls. For example, the Office for Youth announced a public call in 2020 (the Public call for co-financing youth work programmes in 2020 and 2021 / [Javni poziv za sofinanciranje programov mladinskega dela v letih 2020 in 2021](#)). Status of an organisation in the public interest in the youth sector is a precondition for a youth organisation to candidate for funding (to co-finance project or programme). In order to obtain the status, the organisations must meet the following conditions (see Article 11 of the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act), which can be seen as the first quality criterion. When applying for the co-financing, youth organisations need to meet the objectives and subject matter of the public calls and award criteria for the quality and scope of the applied programme. These award criteria ([merila in kriteriji za vrednotenje prijavljenih programov](#)) were:

1. Award criteria for the national youth organisation programme (criteria for the quality of the applied programme):

- Evaluation of the programme
- Quality of programme's content, organisational and timetable plan
- Involvement of young people with fewer opportunities
- Methodology of work – implementation of different forms, methods and the process through which the competences of young people are developed, promote active independent work of young people and their cooperation with the environment

2. Award criteria for the allocation of resources to pursue the activities of the youth centre (criteria for the quality and scope of the programme)

- Evaluation of the programme
- Quality of programme's content, organisational and timetable plan
- Number of active participants in the planned programme
- Involvement of young people with fewer opportunities
- Methodology of work – implementation of different forms, methods and the process through which the competences of young people are developed, promote active independent work of young people and their cooperation with the environment

3. Award criteria for other NGOs implementing the youth work programme (criteria for the quality and scope of the programme)

- Coherence of individual activities according to the objectives and results described under each activity
- Quality of programme's content, organisational and timetable plan

- Scope of programme's implementation at national level
- Number of active participants in the planned programme
- Involvement of young people with fewer opportunities
- Methodology of work – implementation of different forms, methods and the process through which the competences of young people are developed, promote active independent work of young people and their cooperation with the environment

There are many elements in the public call that pursue quality in youth work: how the organisations evaluate their programme, how they involve young people in evaluation, how they take into account the knowledge and behaviour of young people, how they plan their programme and involve young people, etc. The Programme Erasmus+ also has quality assurance built into the application process and other activities carried out during the implementation of projects.

Actors involved in the field of youth work (for example youth organisations) have their own systems of quality assurance. For example, if a local unit wants to become a member of a Slovenian Catholic Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Association, they have to fulfil some requirements, e.g. logo in the name, the number of members of the unit ...). Organisations also have established processes, which they follow: e.g. how they apply for the projects, how they organize events, the invitation to the event shall always be sent at least 6 days before the event... Although these are basically quality standards, they are not conceptualized as quality standards.

There are various quality systems that have emerged from partnerships. One example is the [ABC of Youth Work](#) project. Based on the data obtained, partners in the project established a quality system for improving work in youth organisations.

In November 2018, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth organized the annual National Conference of the Youth Sector, with the focus on quality in the youth sector. The consultation was prepared jointly with the Youth Council of Slovenia (see [report](#) in Slovene) with the goal to prepare standards of quality youth work (see Youth Wiki section 10.8 Current debates and reforms).

### **The main mechanisms in place to evaluate the quality of youth work**

Youth Network MaMa launched the Logbook pilot project in 2018. Logbook is a web-based system for documentation and follow up of youth work. It is a tool that helps youth workers document their work in a structured way. They gather information with the purpose of making it possible to analyse and develop youth work and to promote reflective practice, which is the foundation for analysis and reflections on how to improve the quality in youth work. In Slovenia, the tool is implemented in eight municipalities: Ljubljana, Novo mesto, Brežice, Maribor, Celje, Škofja Loka, Krško and Zagorje ob Savi. The Logbook system anticipates the active participation of young people and is based on various tools for evaluating the work done by youth workers at youth centres. Through various evaluation questionnaires, indicators are developed for each youth centre and municipality, which also enables evaluation of the progress and development of each youth centre. It enables youth workers to regularly monitor statistics on activities and visitors of the youth centre. Based on this information, youth work can develop and is more quality. In 2021, after the two completed pilot phases of the project in 2019-2020, the MaMa network will continue to implement the project in Slovenian municipalities and youth centres

The implementation of Logbook is part of the [Europe Goes Local](#) project, which aims to develop and strengthen quality youth work at the local level, in particular through enhanced cooperation between various stakeholders that are active at the municipal level.

### **The main outcomes of quality assurance processes**

After the organisation's application for the public call for co-financing youth work programmes is successful, the organisation can start to implement the applied youth work programme. The Office for Youth controls the implementation with reports that the



organisations should submit twice a year. If the report does not meet the quality criteria (e.g. is not implemented), the Office for Youth can withhold the funds or they do not allocate the remainder of the funds to the organisation. Feedback from participants is not foreseen.

Representatives of the Office for Youth also carry out announced control visits “on the ground” (at the premises of the organisation) and attend the events they are invited to see if organisation implements the programme.

The organisation should also report every year in March if they are still implementing the programme for youth, which enabled them to obtain the status of an organisation in the public interest in the youth sector (see Article 11 of the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act). They may also be deprived of their status, which would mean the loss of co-financing of a youth work programme.

## Research and evidence supporting Youth Work

Unlike many other European countries, Slovenia does not have a comprehensive system for monitoring the status of young people. The National Programme for Youth 2013-2022 ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013–2022](#)) includes reference to research segment in the youth field:

6.2.4 *objective: “Strengthening the research and analysis segment in the youth field”* (Criterion: the existence of an organisation that considers youth research as a core activity; Expected development impact: ensuring long-term and stable youth research)

Priority subsection 11: “Establishment of a national youth research organisation”.

- Measure operator: The Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth
- Financial plan: funding is/will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia
- Period and time limits: until 2022
- Assessment indicators:
  - establishment of a unit for youth research (within existing research organisations);
  - number of analyses and surveys that analyse and substantively evaluate the impact of international youth work and learning mobility in youth work.

However, the Implementation plans for the National programme for Youth for the periods 2016/2017, 2018/2019 and 2020/2021 did not foresee special funds for supporting research on youth work. In the Implementation plan for the year 2015, setting up a youth research unit (within existing research organisations) was foreseen. Estimated amount of financial resources was 40.000 EUR.

Institute for the development of youth mobility (MOVIT) is member of the [Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme](#), which provides evidence to better understand processes and outcomes in youth work and non-formal education. RAY has several research projects, most notably:

- RAY Monitoring ([RAY MON](#)): 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 (*ongoing*).
- RAY Long term effects of Erasmus+: Youth in action on participation and active citizenship ([RAY LTE](#)): one of the objectives is to explore competence development through on-formal and informal learning in Erasmus+ Youth in Action youth worker mobility projects (*completed in 2019*).
- RAY competence development and capacity building in Erasmus+ Youth in action ([RAY CAP](#)): the project is uncovering the impact of the programme on competences of youth

workers and youth leaders. A special module B informs on competence transfer into youth work practice (*completed in 2019*).

The empirical study [Youth 2020](#) (Mladina 2020) on the position of young people in Slovenia was carried out under the auspices of the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth in 2020 and published in 2021. It also included indicators that fall into the youth work: 1) non-formal work or activities, and 2) membership in voluntary societies and organisations.

In 2013, monograph "Frameworks and challenges of youth work in Slovenia" ([Okviri in izzivi mladinskega dela v Sloveniji](#)) gathered a wide range of discussions on youth work, and a multifaceted reflection of current social issues and social trends that define and challenge contemporary youth work.

In 2010, the Office for Youth further strengthened research activity and obtained additional analyses and research with Youth Network MaMa published an analysis "Youth work and youth policy at the local level" ([Mladinsko delo in mladinska politika na lokalni ravni](#)), which aimed at a comprehensive review and analysis of the state of organisation of the youth sector at the local level, instruments for supporting youth work and local youth policy standards in the light of preparations for the creation of a national youth programme. The analysis also highlights one of the key problems in the field of youth structures and youth work, which is the lack of representation of unorganized youth at the national level. National youth organisations represent only young people whose orientation is of particular interest (scouts, tourism, rural youth), confessional/ideological (Christian) or political (youth organisation of political party). Based on these findings, the objective to ensure the functioning of disorganized youth (6.2.2) was placed in the National Programme for Youth 2013-2022.

## Participative youth work

### Development of top-level youth work policies with the consultation and contribution of young people

There is no permanent system for consulting young people. However, in accordance with the [Youth Council Act](#), the National Youth Council of Slovenia and the local community youth councils shall provide for the participation of young people in adopting statutory and other regulations having an impact on the life and work of young people (Article 5). Prior to drafting acts and other regulations having a direct impact on the life and work of young people, the Government, the ministries and other national authorities and local community bodies shall be obliged to inform the National Youth Council of Slovenia or the local community youth councils thereof (Article 6).

In 2010, we saw the adoption by government of a new [Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act](#). Introduced by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth. This came about following a period of wide public debate, which also included youth actors. According to the Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act, the proposed National Programme for Youth shall be drawn up by the ministry in cooperation with organisations in the youth sector (Article 16). Representative of the National Youth Council of Slovenia was present from the very beginning of the preparation and coordination with the ministries. The proposal was also discussed at the meeting of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth and all the proposals for implementation plans were put on the agenda of the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth.

Prior to the appointment of the group that worked on the National Occupational Qualification initiative, a professional group was established as an initiative of the National Youth Council of Slovenia and the Social Academy to consult on the relevant standards. The aim was to provide professional support during the process of NPK development. The group comprised a number of youth organisations, including representatives of the Social Academy, Youth Network MaMa, Trade Union Youth Plus, Youth Association Without Excuse and the National Youth Council. In this case, it becomes clear that youth organisations can play a powerful role in the creation of public policy related to young people.

The national project of structured dialogue "Youth Dialogue 2.0: Including!" (2013/2014)", established space, possibilities and support for young people from all over Slovenia to actively participate in discussions in the third cycle of structured dialogue. These discussions were on topics of social inclusion through youth work (for more information on the participation of young people in general policy making, see Youth Wiki section [5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making](#)). The latest (7<sup>th</sup> cycle) of the structured dialogue began in January 2019 and focuses on addressing opportunities for young people through quality youth work and providing education and training for youth workers.

### **Involving young people in the design, implementation and evaluation of youth work projects**

Public call for co-financing youth work programmes in 2020 and 2021 from the Office for Youth ([Javni poziv za sofinanciranje programov mladinskega dela v letih 2020 in 2021](#)) emphasizes active participation of young people in the planned programme. When organisations apply their programmes, they should already state the number of active participants (one of the award criteria). Who are active participants is again defined later in the form ([obrazec](#)), together with who the activity is for. The form states that young people shall have an active role as planners, designers, organizers, implementers, manufacturers etc. and that active participants are not passive viewers, listeners, visitors, and users of services and products. On the other hand, the Office for Youth annually request a response from the organisations in the sector on their view on the public call, what could be improved, what they propose.

### **Smart youth work: youth work in the digital world**

#### **Trainings to equip both youth workers and young people with digital and media literacy skills to be used in youth work projects**

In 2018, the Youth Network MaMa started implementing 24-month strategic partnership project "Smart youth work in youth centres" ([Pametno mladinsko delo v mladinskih centrih](#)). The project responds to the challenges youth policy, youth work and youth in the field of digitisation of youth work face. It also aims to define methods and tools for smart youth work in Slovenia and to develop methodology for training of youth workers. As a part of the project, international [training course for youth workers](#) that want to face and challenge digitalization in the youth field will take place in November 2019 in Slovenia. Youth workers will be trained how to use digital tools and methods in their programmes and their daily work with young people. The project is funded by the Erasmus+.

The project "Programming is a game" ([Programiranje je igra](#)) by the [Social Academy](#) includes young people (15-24 years old) to make the first steps into the world of programming. With the help of the creative environment of Scratch, participants get familiar with the environment of programming and make their first project. The workshops are led by the trainer of the Social Academy. Through their experiences in the digital youth work, they bring young people closer to programming.

Within the "[European Wide Web of Youth Work](#)" project, the [Social Academy](#) collected and created digital tools that support youth workers and trainers in their "digital" approach to young people. A practical manual with tools to design and facilitate [online training](#) of youth workers including real life experiences and examples was one activity of the project. Digital tools are available to youth workers on the organisation's online [platform](#).

In 2019, the Nefiks Institute started with a set of trainings "Digital youth work – How to become a social network manager ([Digitalno mladinsko delo – kako postaneš upravljaec družbenih omrežij](#))". Trainings help youth workers understand what digital youth work is and educate them to become digital network managers.

Under the banner of [SAFE.SI](#), an Awareness Centre SAFE.SI raises awareness about safe and responsible use of internet and new technologies. The project's aim is to provide children, teenagers, parents, teachers, youth workers and social workers with knowledge and tools for guiding, empowering and helping children and teenagers in the digital world.

There is a big interest to receive trainings and workshops on online safety for different target groups, especially among Slovenian schools. Therefore, the "SPES association" ([Društvo za kulturo odnosov SPES](#)) developed as a part of a "Healthy Social Networks" project ([Zdrava družbena omrežja](#)) a course and classroom-based materials to help youth workers, teachers, educators, all those involved in non-profit youth and other organisations to contribute to the smarter use of online social networks among young people.

With the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic, debates about digital youth work became even more relevant. Furthermore, digital youth work has indeed needed to be tested in practice. Youth Network MaMa collected good practices of digital youth work by youth centers in the time of covid-19 pandemic ([Prakse mladinskih centrov v času epidemije COVID-19](#) and [Prakse mladinskih centrov v času 2. vala epidemije COVID-19](#)).

### **Initiatives and measures to make digital infrastructure available to youth work projects and programmes**

Successful application on the call for proposals "Employment in the field of youth work in the youth sector" ([Javni razpis "Zaposlitev na področju mladinskega dela v mladinskem sektorju"](#)), ensured several organizations such as Youth Cultural Centre Maribor ([MKC Maribor](#)), [PiNa](#) and [Zavod Ypsilon](#) an employment of a youth worker in 2018. The Digital youth work programme is a training of a digital youth worker through the creation of a digital youth centre, which is a production-educational space for the promotion and development of digital youth work and the promotion of young people in the creative industries. The digital youth centre also provides digital information on events and opportunities in the youth sector.

Currently, there is still no mechanism to fund digital youth work in Slovenia, even though many organisations in the youth sector already deliver content related to smart and digital youth work. (Technical) infrastructure provided for this is quite different. Some organisations provide this from the regular funding they get, and some from the funds raised through a call for proposals on subject of digitalisation.

Institute for the development of youth mobility (MOVIT) supports various international trainings, seminars and conferences on smart youth work. Either they co-organize in cooperation with national agencies from other countries or send participants from Slovenia (read more on Digital youth work ([Digitalno mladinsko delo](#))).

### **Initiatives aiming at facilitating cooperation and partnerships in order to support the transmission of digital practices and technology to youth work**

In October 2019, the MOVIT Institute and the Office for Youth are organizing a Forum on digital youth work "When, if not now?" ("[Kdaj, če ne zdaj?](#)"). Participants will explore trends in digitization and learn about different digital methods and practices that can be useful in the context of youth work.

Together with the participants of the 2017 National consultation at the end of November, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth opened a public debate on the (un)importance of digital youth work. National Youth Sector Consultation 2017 with the title "Is it time for youth digital work?" ([Ali je čas za digitalno mladinsko delo?](#)) has raised issues related to the rapid technological development and digitization of the society, especially youth.

The Association for Culture and Education [PiNA](#) is partner in an Erasmus+, KA2 project, Strategic partnership in the field of youth "[FUTURE LABS – new digital and social innovative tools for youth work](#)". Specific objectives of the project are: 1. capacitate youth workers in digitalization and in social innovation; 2. test new approaches with young people in a co-creative manner; 3. evaluate, adapt and spread the tools wider in the European youth work community. One of the project activities was the training for digital and social innovative tools. In collaboration with the Youth Centre Koper, PiNA organized an event "Challenges and opportunities for youth work in the digital age ([Izzivi in priložnosti](#))

[mladinskega dela v digitalni dobi](#)) in April 2019. The training focused on the opportunities and challenges for youth work in the digital age and the pitfalls that digital devices bring to youth workers, as well as on various methods and examples of good practices in the use of digital media and technology in youth work. It was followed by the demonstration of digital youth work practices (e.g. [Future Labs podcast](#), [Aplikacija Mladim](#)).

## 10.5 Youth workers

### Status in national legislation

#### Status of youth worker

In Slovenia, youth worker status applies to any person. Youth workers in Slovenia can be paid employees or can be involved in youth activities on a voluntary basis. Involvement can be full- time or part-time among both paid employees and volunteers, also involving a rich variety of people. Evidence suggest (see [report](#)) that the majority of youth workers are trained via other professions: a research study from 2006 found that among the 263 people interviewed, 76 different occupations were reported.

Since 2008, the Catalogue of functions, jobs and titles ([Katalog funkcij, delovnih mest in nazivov](#)) specifies five roles (the data is valid from 8 December 2018) for those working in public sector (e.g. in publically funded youth centres):

**Table 1: Youth worker profession in classification of public sector professions**

Workplace	Tariff class (education level)	Salary grade (basic, minimal)	Salary grade (final, maximal)
Youth worker II (Mladinski delavec II)	IV	17	27
Youth worker I (Mladinski delavec I)	V	20	30
Youth programmes coordinator (Kordinator mladinskih programov)	VI	23	33
Head of youth programmes (Vodja mladinskih programov)	VII/1	30	40
Specialist for youth work (Specialist za mladinsko delo)	VII/2	32	42

There is no official statistic how many youth workers there are in Slovenia.

#### Specific standards and criteria for youth workers

There are no minimum qualification standards for publically funded youth workers or for volunteer/unpaid youth workers. However, in 2017, occupational standard and catalogue of standards of professional knowledge and skills have been approved for youth workers. Youth worker as a vocation/occupation has been recognised as part of the National Vocational Qualification System and with it, part of the Vocational Education and training system in Slovenia. The occupational standards established at the national level are compared with candidates' acquired knowledge and experience. Occupational competences of youth workers defined in the occupational standard ([poklicni standard](#)) are (youth worker is able to):

- plan, implement and evaluate youth programmes in cooperation with young people;

- establish and maintain cooperative and confidential relations with a young person;
- work with young people in groups and teams;
- enable young people to acquire competences;
- undertake activities to disseminate the results of young people's work;
- ensure the quality of one's own work and to take care of one's own personal and professional development;
- respect the principles of sustainable development and the protection of health at work with young people.

The occupational profile of a youth worker involves different types of staff, especially within organisations in the youth sector. Youth workers are running youth organisations or groups of young people, do project work, volunteering, non-formal education and other professional support to young people. Youth workers also help young people to develop their skills and talents, especially in the field of extracurricular activities. In communication with young people, youth worker implements and designs youth work programmes. The youth worker is an expert in organizing, implementing and evaluating the activities of young people in their free time and placing them in the decision-making processes.

## **Education, training and skills recognition**

### **Paths in initial education leading to a qualification as youth worker**

There is no formal education for a youth worker in Slovenia.

There are also no accredited courses in youth work in Slovenia, but The Faculty of Social Work (University of Ljubljana) offers a course 'Concepts of social work with young people' in the 3rd year of the bachelor degree study programme 'Social Work'. The course aims to train students for quality work with young people. The content of the course includes forms of work with young people, especially in kindergartens and schools, in youth clubs and other (street-based and community-based) spaces for youth (see the [curriculum](#)).

The bachelor degree study programme 'Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences' at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, offers the elective course 'Introduction to Youth Work and Youth Research'. In this course, students are expected to acquire the following transferable skills: applied skills for the analysis and organisation of group work, project work, skills for the organisation of informal cultural events, the ability to critically and engagingly reflect contemporary youth cultural events (see the [curriculum](#)).

The (single subject and combined) bachelor degree study programme 'Pedagogy and Andragogy' at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, lists the organisation of educational work in youth centres as one of the core competences acquired by students (see the study programme's [presentation book](#)).

Within the combined bachelor degree study programme 'Pedagogy' at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, students learn about the work of an organiser and manager of various activities in youth centres within the compulsory course 'Didactic Practicum' (see the [curriculum](#)).

The combined bachelor degree study programme '[Sociology](#)' and the combined master degree study programme '[Sociology](#)' (pedagogical qualification) at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, cite knowledge and understanding of the position, needs and interests of individuals, especially young people, as one of the core competences acquired by students.

In Slovenia, an individual can acquire National Vocational Qualification of Youth worker. Since it was not possible to obtain a publicly valid education for performing youth work profession, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth introduced an initiative to prepare the occupational standard and a Catalogue of standards of professional knowledge and skills for a youth worker, based on the Resolution on the National Programme for

Youth. The proposal for the initiative was discussed and approved by the relevant sectoral committee for vocational standards in March 2015. Consequently, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI) began the preparation of the proposal of the qualification standard. The qualification standard for a youth worker was adopted by the Expert Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training in December 2016. At that point, the youth worker has become a profession. The aim is to make this qualification a formally recognised qualification, gained as follows:

1. Completion of programme for vocational or professional education
2. Verification and validation of national vocational qualification.

The profession of a youth worker can be obtained through the National Occupational Qualification System, which means that the candidate draws up a compilation of a portfolio (e.g. certificates, supporting documents, reference letters, products, recognition documents ...) with his/her past experience and defends it in front of the committee. In the event that the candidate fails to prove all the competences from the occupational standard with the portfolio, he/she needs to pass the exam.

### **Training for continuous professional development available to youth workers**

Although there is no formal education to become a youth worker or a youth leader in Slovenia, there are many different training opportunities available for youth workers within different national (youth) organisations. Main providers of such trainings are:

- Youth Network MaMa;
- National Youth Council of Slovenia;
- Institute for the development of youth mobility (Zavod MOVIT), National agency for Erasmus+: Youth programme;
- Centre for information service, co-operation and development of NGOs;
- concept of learning organisations within many of national youth organisations.

Topics of the courses are, for example: basic training in project management, communication skills, public relations, intercultural learning, intergeneration cooperation, fundraising and organisational management (see [report](#)). However, no systematic data are available on this. The Office for Youth does not specifically provide trainings, but (co)finances the trainings which are provided by organisations in the youth sector.

Examples of trainings:

“Basics of youth work and digital youth work” ([Usposabljanje osnove mladinskega dela in digitalno mladinsko delo](#)) by the Youth Network MaMa. It focuses on the basics of youth work, visions of youth centers, youth policies, involvement of vulnerable target groups in youth center programmes, digital youth work.

“Young people’s mental health” ([Spletno usposabljanje na temo duševnega zdravja mladih](#)) by the Youth Network MaMa – training was organised in response to the relevance of young people’s mental health topic in times of pandemic.

“Training course for managers in youth organisations” ([Usposabljanje za menedžerje v mladinskih organizacijah](#)) by the National Youth Council of Slovenia – intended for those who hold leadership roles in youth organisations or are preparing for this role. The purpose of the training is to train experienced youth leaders to take leadership roles in youth organisations responsibly.

“Training course for trainers in youth work” ([Usposabljanje za trenerje v mladinskem delu](#)) by the National Youth Council of Slovenia – the purpose of the training is to train coaches in youth work for: preparation, implementation and evaluation of youth work trainings; working with young adults; designing a system of holistic growth for youth leaders in their organisation; to educate potential staff for the National Youth Council’s “Pool of trainers”.

“Trainings for applicants and beneficiaries” ([Izobraževanja za prijavitelje in upravičence](#)) by Zavod MOVIT, the Institute for the development of youth mobility – various international trainings, seminars and conferences. The trainings are intended to encourage exchanges of good practice and international cooperation and to develop the capacities of organisations in the field of youth work and the development of further projects within the Erasmus + programme: Youth in Action in Slovenia.

'[Youth in Contemporary Society](#)' is a pilot training programme in the field of youth studies. It is part of the international strategic partnership '[Supporting Evidence-based Education of Youth Workers \(SEEW\)](#)' between IDIZ (Zagreb), University of Ljubljana and University of Rijeka, which aims to build the capacity of youth workers. The project contributes in the long term to the professionalisation of youth work and the quality of youth work in the partner countries, as well as in a wider geographical context.

'[Training for street-based youth workers](#)' by the Youth Street Network (Mreža Mlada ulica). The theoretical-practical training aims at strengthening youth street work through the transmission of the professional content necessary for successful youth street work.

Trainings and courses ([Odbor za izobraževanje](#)) offered by the ŠKIS Association (Association of Student Clubs of Slovenia) – support and assist student club activists in the successful and quality functioning of the club, encourage the transfer of knowledge of older activists to new ones, and support and form non-formal education among the students. Trainers are trained throughout the year in education domestically and abroad.

“For youth health” ([Za zdravje mladih 2.0](#) (2017-2019)) by the Slovenian catholic Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Association, together with the Association No Excuse – trainings for youth leaders and workshops designed to raise awareness and educate people about coping with risk factors to prevent addiction.

“For youth health” ([Za zdravje mladih 1.0](#) (2015/2016)) by the Slovenian catholic Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Association, together with the Association No Excuse, the Scout Association of Slovenia and the Slovenian National Youth Council – training courses for youth leaders and youth workers on the issues of health of young people (2015/2016).

“Training for Youth Career Counsellors” ([Usposabljanje za mladinske karijerne svetovalce](#)) by the Nefiks Institute – course intended for young people and youth workers who want to provide support to young people regarding career development. The project is co-financed by the MIZŠ and the European Social Fund.

### **Procedure for the validation of skills and competences gained by youth workers through non-formal and informal learning**

In Slovenia, since 2017 an individual can acquire National Vocational Qualification of Youth worker. [National Occupational Qualifications](#) give individuals a possibility to validate their skills and knowledge obtained through the pursuit of one's occupation, volunteer work, leisure activities, participation in non-formal training programmes, self-learning etc. The recognition is facilitated by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training. National Vocational Qualifications attests to one's competence to perform a certain occupation. The certificate is also recognised at the national and European level (see [report](#)). There is no other form of national recognition of youth work.

For recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work, there are some practices in the youth sector (Nefiks, Moje izkušnje, TaPas, MEPI, Mladinska značka v ovkiru TiPovej etc.), that are more or less closely linked to the established European platforms (Europass, Youthpass) (for more information see Youth Wiki section 10.6 Recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work).

## **Mobility of youth workers**

### **Type of activities undertaken by youth workers**

Mobility is mostly done through a range of EU programmes, especially the Erasmus+ programme and the European Solidarity Corps. The Implementation plan for the period



2020/2021 ([Izvedbeni načrt Resolucije o Nacionalnem programu za mladino 2013-2022 za leti 2020 in 2021](#)) has this specific aim in the field: Promoting inclusion in international youth work and learning mobility in youth work and strengthening them. Two measures are provided in order to reach this goal: Erasmus+ Key Action 1 (Mobility projects for young people and youth workers) and Erasmus+ Key Action 2 (Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices). Both measures are implemented by MOVIT, the National Agency for the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme. The first measure is aimed at supporting Key Action 1, Learning Mobility among Individuals, which aims to provide opportunities for individuals to improve their skills, enhance their employability and gain a sense of cultural awareness.

1. *Erasmus+: Key action 1 (Mobility projects for young people and youth workers)*

Indicative amount of financial contribution provided, total: 2020: 1.809.157 EUR.

The second measure is aimed at supporting Key Action 2, Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices. This action seeks to enable organisations to work together in order to improve their provisions for learners and share innovative practices.

2. *Erasmus+: Key action 2 (Strategic Partnerships projects on the youth field)*

Indicative amount of financial contribution provided, total: 2020: 694.276 EUR.

### **Geographical scope of the programmes/projects/initiatives**

Mobility of youth workers usually takes place at the international level, mostly through the Erasmus+ programme and the European Solidarity Corps.

### **Main objectives**

The main reason for mobility of youth workers is mostly capacity building – both individuals and organisations. This mobility is predominantly done through the Erasmus+ the Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA). This capacity building should also be seen in the light of project management within the programme: contact making seminars, partnership building, finding common content points for potential new projects.

## **10.6 Recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work**

### **Existing arrangements**

General system on skills recognition is described in Youth Wiki chapter 6, [section 6.4 Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning](#). The same framework applying to non-formal and informal learning also applies to youth work. There is no specific analysis done on the competences that individuals can obtain on trainings, but there are examples of good practice for recording knowledge and skills gained through youth work, such as:

- System of recording non-formally acquired knowledge ([Sistem za beleženje neformalno pridobljenega znanja](#)) by the Nefiks Institute;
- [Learning badges](#) (Učne značke) – utilization of open digital badges to value and recognize learning during non-formal learning activities;
- [My experiences](#) (Moje izkušnje) – a tool for validation and recognition of working experience, gained by student work.

These tools are being developed in different contexts (international learning mobility, increasing employability, etc.) and different channels (youth work, volunteer, student work, full-time employment). Most of them were created with the active assistance of the Office for Youth Office. Youthpass and Europass are also widely used by young people and youth workers to record their skills and knowledge.

The profession of a youth worker can be obtained through the National Occupational Qualification System, which means that the candidate draws up a compilation of a portfolio (e.g. certificates, supporting documents, reference letters, products, recognition documents ...) with his/her past experience.

Extracurricular activities, organized by universities, other higher education institutions or other organisations and recognized by higher education institutions as relevant for the acquisition of a variety of competences, may be recorded by the institutions in the diploma supplement, thereby enabling the review of all institutionally supported individual activities in a transparent manner (see the Resolution on National programme of higher education ([Resolucija o Nacionalnem programu visokega šolstva 2011–2020](#))).

## Skills

No national policy and/or recognition mechanism that identify specific skills and competences that can be acquired through youth work exist. Many organisations have internal competence framework for different roles in the organisations. Specific competences can be obtained on the individual level of individual organisations, e.g. scouts make it clear, that they educate future leaders, people who are willing to serve, people who are employable. In that sense, they gain these skills and competences through participation in the activities of scouts. However, as none of those are recognised on the national level, we cannot talk about national policy on that.

While not every involvement in youth work necessarily allows young people to develop key competences that employers seek and value, organisations in the youth sector can be a place where young people develop competences to the degree that they are flexible enough and transferable to all areas of youth activity.

## 10.7 Raising awareness about youth work

### Information providers

Web portal [mlad.si](#) is intended for all young people in the Republic of Slovenia and for youth workers. All the necessary information about youth can be found on the portal, including all the opportunities that are offered to young people outside the education process and the first work experience. The portal connects in substance the three main entry points and sections, meaningfully forming the life cycle of young people, their needs and the desire to actively spend their free time and meet the challenges of the age between 15 and 29.

[Talentiran.si](#), web portal by the Nefiks Institute, the leading system of recording non-formal acquired knowledge in Slovenia, which allows young people to systematically collect all non-formal acquired and certified competences in one place. The portal offers relevant news and upcoming events, where young people and youth workers can participate.

Youth Information and Counselling Centre of Slovenia ([Zavod MISSS, Mladinsko informativno svetovalno središče Slovenije](#)) is non-governmental non-profit organization, working as national youth information and counselling service, thus collaborating with 16 regional and local youth information and counselling centres throughout the Slovenia. The local centres disseminate information in their local space and provide counselling in choosing the right information.

L'MIT ([Ljubljanska mreža info točk](#)) established in 1998 by the Office for Youth of the City of Ljubljana, unites non-profit organisations active in the field of youth information. It is an important mechanism for informing about youth work and opportunities for young people in Ljubljana.

### Key initiatives

Two objectives in the National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 address informing on youth work:

- 6.2.1 objective: "Promoting the participation and representation of young women and men"

Priority subsection 5: "Strengthening information and counselling in the youth sector" includes the following indicators:

- the existence of regular involvement of schools with organisations in the youth sector to inform youth participation opportunities;
- number of organisations in the youth sector providing information and advice in the youth sector;
- the number of visits to the portal [mlad.si](http://mlad.si);

Measure operator is the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth, participant is the youth sector, funding (expected until 2022) is/will be provided within the available budget of the Republic of Slovenia.

- 6.2.2 objective: "Promoting the establishment and development of organisations in the youth sector, developing key areas of the youth sector and ensuring the functioning of disorganized youth"

Priority subsection 8: "Creating capacities for quality youth work and establishing a national training and education system for youth workers and youth leaders".

- The objective addresses the necessity to ensure the development of a communication strategy for the promotion of organisations in the field of youth work and their activities, and the reputation of youth work and youth activities, among both young people and the rest of the public, with an emphasis on employers.

The most resounding campaigns on the youth work of the last period were:

- "Grow together" ([Rastimo skupaj](#)) in 2020: the Youth Council of Slovenia as the main organizer on the initiative of the Office of for Youth implemented the project in cooperation with municipalities and youth organisations with the aim of developing youth local policies.
- [Europe Goes Local](#) project, which aims to develop and strengthen quality youth work at the local level, in particular through enhanced cooperation between various stakeholders that are active at the municipal level.
- European Solidarity Corps: Institute for the development of youth mobility (MOVIT) organized regional events where youth work was also indirectly promoted.
- Rules on the Implementation of the Act on the Public Interest in Youth Sector ([Pravilnik o izvajanju Zakona o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#)) provided national awards in the youth sector. National awards are given for the purpose of public recognition and appreciation for outstanding achievements in the youth sector. The awards are given for achievements in the youth sector and their contributions to the youth sector, in the case of good practices and the promotion or popularization of youth work at local, regional, national, European or international level. The criteria for granting national recognition for outstanding achievement are also: compliance with the principles and content of youth work; influencing public awareness of the importance of youth work; contribution to the development of youth work (sector).

## 10.8 Current debates and reforms

### Forthcoming policy developments

Subject to public debate will soon become the new National Programme for Youth, as the current ends in 2022. Renewed EU Youth Strategy will (according to the interviewees) most likely influence the content of the new Programme. The new Programme, expected to start in 2023, will set future guidelines for the measures in the field of youth work.

## Ongoing debates

The National conference of the youth sector ([Nacionalni posvet mladinskega sektorja 2019](#)) in 2019, organized by the Office for Youth in cooperation with the Youth Council of Slovenia, focused on the quality of youth work. It addressed quality issues in youth work, and raised questions related to monitoring and quality assurance in youth work. The 2020 National conference ([Nacionalni posvet mladinskega sektorja 2020](#)) took place online, thematically around the topics of space and participation for all. The 2021 National conference ([Nacionalni posvet mladinskega sektorja 2021](#)), which will take place in December 2021, will aim to take stock of the current state of the youth sector and develop strategic orientations. The conclusions of the discussions at the last consultation are likely to influence the new National Programme for Youth, which is expected to be ready by 2023 (the current programme expires in 2022).

Youth 2020 ([Mladina 2020](#)), the in-depth research on the situation of young people in Slovenia, was conducted by the Faculty of Arts (University of Maribor) together with the Faculty of Social Sciences (University of Ljubljana). A monograph with the findings was published in 2021. The research (funded by the Office for Youth) was largely designed as a follow-up to [Youth 2010](#) and Youth 2000 researches, which enables an insight into long-term trends in the field of youth. The research provides a fundamental starting point for the new National Programme for Youth. In the preparation phase of the research youth organisations were invited to submit substantive proposals.

Debates about digital youth work as well as testing good practices in this field are especially relevant since the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic. Youth Network MaMa is collecting examples of good practices of digital youth work ([Prakse mladinskih centrov v času epidemije COVID-19](#) and [Prakse mladinskih centrov v času 2. vala epidemije COVID-19](#)). Rapid development of digitisation, which has recently also taken place in youth work, is expected to have an impact also on the new calls for proposals for the co-funding of youth work programmes.

In December 2021, the strategic partnership '[Supporting Evidence-based Education of Youth Workers \(SEEW\)](#)' of the Erasmus+ partners IDIZ (Zagreb), University of Ljubljana and University of Rijeka, which aims at strengthening the capacity of youth workers, will come to an end with a [conference](#) on the future and quality of youth work. The project also concludes the pilot study programme '[Youth in Contemporary Society](#)'. In addition to discussing the recent developments in youth work, the conference will also address the need for the establishment of a youth work study programme.

Currently, 'local youth work' is recognized as an important topic in the youth sector. In September 2021, Consultation of representatives of municipalities and youth centres "Together for local youth work" ([Posvet predstavnikov občin in mladinskih centrov "Skupaj za lokalno mladinsko delo"](#)) took place in the Youth center Koper ([Center mladih Koper](#)). The aim of the Consultation was to deepen relations between municipalities and youth centres, and exchange experiences in supporting youth work in local communities.

## GLOSSARY

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**Aktivna politika zaposlovanja:** Active employment policy. One of the measures by which the state can contribute to the increase in employment in the labour market and thus to reduce unemployment.

**Deficitarni poklici:** In-demand professions. Professions for which the gap between supply and demand is perceived in the labour market.

**Denarno nadomestilo:** Unemployment benefit. Youths under 30 years of age who were insured for six months in the two years prior to their unemployment can receive

unemployment benefit. The benefit cannot be lower than 350 EUR and not higher than 892.50 EUR (gross).

**Državna štipendija:** State scholarship. A supplementary benefit intended to cover the costs incurred during schooling. It targets vulnerable youth and is issued by the Centre for Social Work.

**Etični kodeks organiziranega prostovoljstva:** The Ethical Code of Organized Volunteering. It sets out basic guidelines for organized volunteering and represents the basic guidance of good work in volunteering.

**Gimnazija:** Gymnasium. Educational institution for provision of upper secondary general education or programme of upper secondary general education. Students who have successfully completed the Gimnazija programme may continue education at the higher education institution.

**Jamstvo za mlade:** Youth Guarantee. Youth Guarantee in Slovenia applies to persons up to 29 years of age, although the EU YG includes only 15–25 year olds.

**Ljubiteljska kultura:** Amateurish culture. A unique phenomenon through which many (academic) choirs, folklore groups, musicals, theatre groups work. It is performed on a voluntary basis and accessible to everyone.

**Ljudska univerza:** Folk high school. Adult education takes place in folk high schools.

**Mladi:** Youth. Young people and young adults of both genders aged between 15 and a completed 29 years.

**Mladim prijazna prostovoljska organizacija:** Youth-Friendly Voluntary Organisation. An award provided by the Slovenian Network of Voluntary Organisations can be granted to all organisations, which provide a quality mentorship to young volunteers under the age of 18.

**Mladinska infrastruktura:** Youth infrastructure. A physical space (land or building or part of building) intended particularly for the youth for carrying out the youth work.

**Mladinska organizacija:** Youth organisation. An autonomous, democratic, volunteer and independent association of youth, which with its operation enables the youth to gain planned learning experience, form and express their viewpoints and implement their activities in accordance with their interest, cultural, principle or political orientation, and is organised as an independent legal entity, namely as a society or an association of societies or as an integral part of another legal entity, namely a society, an association of societies, a trade union or a political party providing that the autonomy of operation in the youth sector has been ensured by the basic act of this legal entity.

**Mladinska politika:** Youth policy. A harmonised set of measures of various sectoral public policies with the purpose of promoting and facilitating the integration of youth in the economic, cultural and political life of the community and appropriate support mechanisms for developing youth work and operation of youth organisations, which is carried out in cooperation with autonomous and democratic representatives of youth organisations and professional and other organisations.

**Mladinski program:** Youth programme. A set of activities implemented by a youth organisation carried out among their peers continuously throughout most of the year and involving a large number of holders of activities and active participants.

**Mladinski sektor:** Youth sector. The fields where the process of making and implementing youth policies and the youth work is carried out.

**Mladinski svet Slovenije:** The National Youth Council of Slovenia. The umbrella organisation of national youth organisations and the key partner in the social dialogue in the field of youth.

**Mladinsko delo:** Youth work. An organised and target-oriented form of youth action and is for the youth, within which the youth, based on their own efforts, contribute to their

own inclusion in society, strengthen their competences and contribute to the development of the community. The implementation of various forms of youth work is based on the volunteer participation of the youth regardless of their interest, cultural, principle or political orientation.

**Nacionalna poklicna kvalifikacija:** National Vocational Qualification. It gives you an opportunity to assess and validate knowledge and skills obtained through non-formal learning.

**Namenitev dela dohodnine za donacije:** Allocation of part of personal income tax for donations. 0.5% of income may be taxed and directed to financing activities of general public benefit (see Article 142, the Personal Income Tax Act ([Zakon o dohodnini](#))). This is a new source of funding for voluntary organisations carrying out non-profit activities in the public interest.

**Obvezne izbirne vsebine:** Compulsory elective contents. Defined in the Gimnazije Act (Article 33), are activities that the school offers to pupils with a high degree of autonomy. They cannot be school subjects, compensation for teaching or limited activities with a rigorous curriculum.

**Organizacija v mladinskem sektorju:** Organisation in youth sector. A subject which operates in the youth sector and is organised as a youth organisation or an organisation for the youth or a youth council.

**Organizacija za mlade:** Organisation for youth. A legal entity which implements the youth programme, but is not a youth organisation, and is organised as an institute, an institution or a cooperative.

**Osipnik:** Early school leaver. Person who left school without completing the course or class or without enrolling in another school or other educational institution.

**Program za mlade:** Programme for the youth. A programme of measures in the youth sector implemented by organisations for youth with the purpose of providing the best living conditions, operation and organisation of youth, and carried out continuously through most of the year and involving a large number of active participants.

**Prostovoljec:** Volunteer. An individual performing volunteer work. \*

\* Young people under age of 15 can engage in voluntary activities only if these activities contribute to their educational and personal development, if they do not pose a threat to their health and do not prevent them to fulfil school obligations.

**Prostovoljec leta:** Volunteer of the Year. An individual performing volunteer work. Every year, the Youth Council of Slovenia organises a well-received event "Volunteer of the Year", in which several organisations take part. The volunteers of the year receive the awards from the Minister of Work, Family and Social Affairs.

**Prostovoljstvo:** Volunteering. Socially beneficial unpaid activity of individuals, who, through their work, knowledge and experience contribute to the quality of life of individuals and social groups, and to the development of a solidary, humane and equal society.

**Prostovoljska služba:** Voluntary Service. Organized volunteering by a volunteer performed at least 20 hours per week over a period of at least six months without interruption.

**Prožna varnost:** Flexicurity. The purpose of flexibility as a measure is to help improve the socio-economic situation of young people with enabling faster and easier transition of young people from the education system to the labor market.

**Samozaposleni v kulturi:** Self-employed in culture. Creators, artists (cultural actors) who perform an independent specialized profession in the field of culture.

**Socialna izključenost:** Social exclusion. "The involuntary exclusion/separation of individuals and groups from political, economic and social processes, thereby preventing

their full participation in the society in which they live" (see the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act ([Zakon o javnem interesu v mladinskem sektorju](#))).

**Strukturirani dialog:** Structured dialogue. An open, transparent, long-term, continuous and systematic dialogue between the youth and the holders of power at national and local levels in the youth sector.

**Svet Vlade RS za mladino:** Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Youth. The Council is a consultative body that proposes measures and monitors the consideration of youth interests in various public policies at national level

**Svet Vlade RS za spodbujanje razvoja prostovoljstva, prostovoljskih in nevladnih organizacij:** The Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for the Promotion of Volunteering, Voluntary Organizations and NGOs. The Council monitors, identifies and assesses the situation of voluntary and non-governmental organizations and takes initiatives to encourage their development, gives suggestions for the development and adoption of regulations and measures necessary for the implementation of national policies related to voluntary and non-governmental organizations.

**Šolska športna vzgoja:** School sports education. Vocational guidance of physical education in the entire vertical of the educational system: in kindergartens, the subject is called movement (*gibanje*), in elementary school sport (*šport*) and in secondary school physical education (*športna vzgoja*). In higher education, it has several different denominations.

**Študentska prehrana:** Subsidised students meals. The purpose of subsidised food is to ensure that every student has at least one hot meal each day, consisting of a subsidised part (currently €2.63) and an additional payment, which every student has to pay Slovenia is the only country in Europe with a system of this kind.

**Študentsko delo:** Student labour. An occasional or temporary job that the student performs through an authorized organization based on a student's referral. Authorized organizations are those organizations that have a license (concession) for performing an activity.

**Univerzitetni inkubator:** University incubator. A legal entity that is under a contract or agreement regarding long-term cooperation with the university. It enables the realisation of entrepreneurial initiatives.

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- Youth Center Dravinjske doline ([Mladinski center Dravinjske doline](#)) (last accessed 17/10/2017).
- Youth Center Velenje ([Mladinski center Velenje](#)) (last accessed 17/10/2017).
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- Youth Network No Excuse Slovenia ([Mladinska zveza Brez izgovora Slovenija](#)) (last accessed 16/10/2017).

## ARCHIVE

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Information from previous years can be accessed and freely downloaded through the PDF files below.

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[Slovenia 2020](#)

### 2019

[Slovenia 2019.pdf](#)

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