

Youth Participation Index 2017

Monitoring report of Political, Social and Economic Participation of Youth 2017

Impressum

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Summary

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The main difficulty of developing YPI is collecting adequate data for every country, which is mainly due to different ranges to define youth, the lack of available data, as well as the lack of comparable data in the region.



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Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation - Serbia
NGO Prima - Montenegro
Partners Albania for Change and Development - Albania
Community Volunteers Foundation - Turkey
Association for Education – MLADIINFO International - Macedonia

The project Youth Banks Hub for Western Balkans and Turkey aims to ensure greater involvement of young people in Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey through the establishment of the Youth Banks Hub for the Western Balkans and Turkey Network (YBH4WBT Network) of youth organizations, which was initially founded in 2016. The coordinator of this project is **Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation** from Serbia. The project is being implemented in partnership with Partners Albania for Change and Development from Albania, Association for Education – MLADIINFO International from Macedonia, NGO Prima from Montenegro and Community Volunteers Foundation from Turkey (TOG).

The network's focus is on youth participation in decision-making processes, as well as on monitoring youth policy developments in the Western Balkans and Turkey with the aim of advocating for youth-related issues. In order to help decision-makers create frameworks and tools to ensure active involvement of young people in all decision-making processes that affect them, YBH developed a Youth Participation Index (YPI), which measures the level of opportunity of young people to be involved in the decision-making processes. The YPI consists of three pillars: political participation of young people, social participation of young people and economic participation of young people.

The purpose of this annual monitoring report is to give an overview on the political, social and economic participation of youth in all partner countries through YPI indicators.

About Youth Participation Index (YPI)

The Youth participation Index is a sole method for measuring the level of opportunity of young people to be involved in the decision-making process. The YPI is a detectable, numerical expression of a specific issue in a society. It may contain three dimensions and their indicators. As many others methodologies, the YPI has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages of the YPI are:

1. It can summarize complex, multidimensional data
2. It is easier to interpret than many separate indicators
3. It can assess progress over time

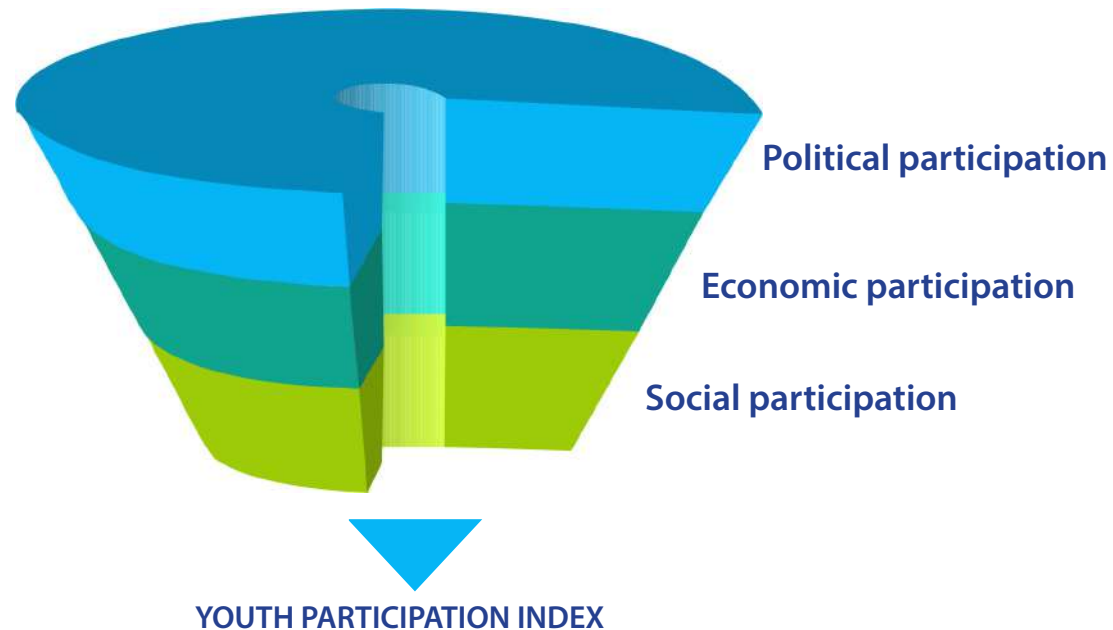
Disadvantages of the YPI are:

1. It may send misleading policy messages if poorly constructed or misinterpreted
2. It may lead to oversimplified policy conclusions
3. The choice of indicators could be the subject of a political dispute

The main advantages of the YPI are that it is simple and easy to understand. The message which is being communicated should be apprehensible to everybody and should have an effect on decision-makers. On the contrary, the YPI could oversimplify complex issues and be misleading. Taking all this into account, Youth Bank Hub decided to create YPI related to the participation of youth with the aim of drawing public attention to the field of Youth Participation, since this issue is one of the most demanding ones in the countries included in the project.

Young people are excluded from the prevailing social, economic and political flows. Despite adopted strategies, action plans and legal framework specifically aimed at tackling this problem, expected achievements of these documents have not been accomplished.

Almost all decisions made by decision-makers affect young people in at least one segment.



Youth Participation Index (YPI) is carefully created by Youth Bank Hub using three dimensions of participation, while **every dimension consists of the set of indicators:**

1. **Political participation** - shows the level of involvement of young people in government bodies, their opportunity to access information and appeal to government bodies, and the existence of youth institutions in local and national bodies.
2. **Economic participation** – shows the level of economic independence of young people. This dimension measures youth unemployment rate, labor force participation rate, NEET rate, the number of self-employed young people, etc.
3. **Social participation** – shows the social demographic characteristics of young people. This dimension assesses the development opportunities of youth, their education level, the percentage of young people in prisons, the percentage of young people at risk of poverty, etc.

At the beginning of the project, policy researchers tried to find the right set of indicators, which would be common for all participating countries. However, bearing in mind that there are 5 countries where this index has been implemented, the identification of the common indicators is still ongoing. The main reasons for that are the unavailability of data, as well as the changes of the officially recognized statistical methodologies in the participating countries.

The YPI is created by the Youth Bank Hub as a non-governmental initiative, not by public institution or government. The data were already collected by the State or as a part of other official statistics. The purpose of this Index is to assess the already available statistics over time. Despite all constrains,

Tracking data in the region

Indicators per dimensions

The proposals of the indicators for three dimensions of Youth Participation Index are presented below.

Political participation

1. Young government ministers
2. Young government deputy ministers
3. Young MPs
4. Young mayors
5. On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of government and parliament
6. On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of municipalities
7. Existence of youth network (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) at the national level
8. Existence of youth network (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) at local levels

Economic participation

1. NEET rate of youth
2. Youth unemployment rate
3. Long-term youth unemployment rate
4. Youth labor force participation rate
5. Youth employment rate
6. Young people that started their own business with the financial support of the state
7. Self-employed young people
8. Young people with disability employed by private sector entities

Social participation

1. Young people at risk of poverty
2. Young people part of social welfare system
3. Young people in prisons
4. Dropout from secondary education
5. Young people enrolled in tertiary education
6. Young people graduated from tertiary education

Since YPI encompasses 5 countries, four from the Balkan region and Turkey, the main obstacle was to collect the comparable data. Every country has a specific and individual way of collecting official statistical data.

Keeping this in mind, the table below shows the availability of data for each indicator in the region.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION - INDICATORS	AVAILABLE DATA
1. Young government ministers	Yes
2. Young government deputy ministers	Yes
3. Young MPs	Yes
4. Young mayors	Yes
5. On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of government and parliament ¹	Yes
6. On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of municipalities ²	Yes
7. Existence of youth network (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) at the national level	Yes
8. Existence of youth network (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) at local levels	Partially*
*Data not available for Turkey	

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION - INDICATORS	AVAILABLE DATA
1. NEET rate	Yes
2. Youth unemployment rate	Yes
3. Long-term youth unemployment rate	Partially*
4. Youth labor force participation rate	Partially*
5. Youth employment rate	Yes
6. Young people that started their own business with the financial support of the state	Partially*
7. Self-employed young people	Partially**
* Data not available for Turkey, ** Data not available for Turkey and Montenegro	

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION - INDICATORS	AVAILABLE DATA
1. Young people at risk of poverty	Partially***
2. Young people part of social welfare system	Partially***
3. Young people in prisons	Partially***
4. Dropout from secondary education	Partially***
5. Young people enrolled in tertiary education	Partially***
6. Young people graduated from tertiary education	Partially***

***Young people at risk of poverty – Data not available for Albania, Montenegro and Turkey. Albania and Turkey have never conducted SILC survey. Montenegro conducted this kind of survey, and the results for 2015, 2016 and 2017 will be published by the end of 2018. Young people part of social welfare system – Data not available for all participating countries except Serbia. The main issue is that they mostly do not record this data for respective group of young people. Young people in prisons - Data not available for Turkey for 2017. Educational indicators – Data not available for Turkey since their educational system is different than the other participating countries’.

The table clearly shows that the majority of difficulties has been encountered in the social participation dimension, since this kind of data is not available in each country. The problem with the data in the social domain was noticed during establishing the YPI, and researchers have tried to be flexible regarding this issue. Accordingly, during the development of the YPI, 15 possible indicators were changed. The 6 presented indicators were kept since they encompass available data. Still, one of the main issues is the issue of the unavailable data.

1 Indicator “On-line tools for information and participation in decision making of municipalities” implies that the institutions have an official website, Facebook and Twitter accounts

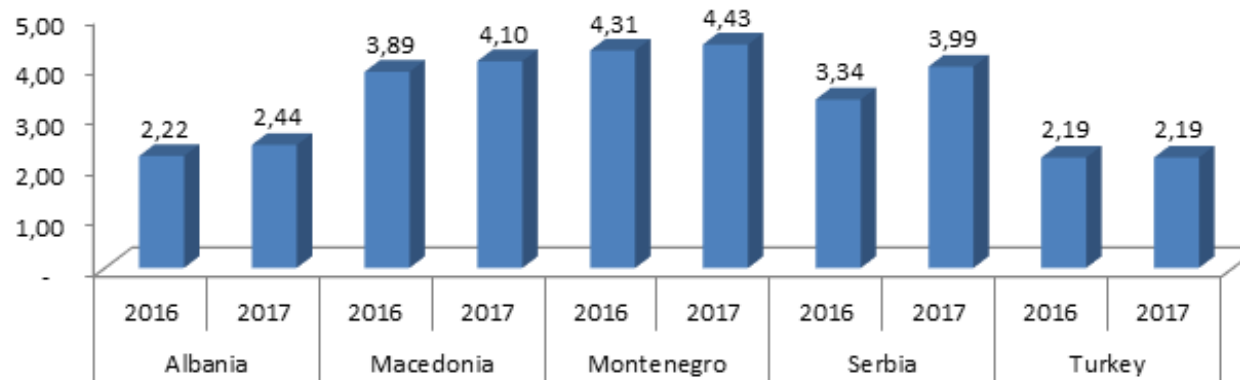
2 Indicator “On-line tools for information and participation in decision making of municipalities” implies that the institutions have an official website, Facebook and Twitter accounts

Youth participation index per dimensions

During the process of collecting data, the Western Balkan countries were realized to have more or less the same official methodologies and statistics, unlike Turkey which uses different ones. There is also the lack of data for Macedonia due to the fact that the data is obsolete and based on the last Census which was conducted in 2002.

Political participation index

Political Participation dimension - comparison by countries



The data presented in the above graph are related to the political participation dimension, and are collected both using official data and from on-line presentations of the respective institutions for the period 2016-2017. Since there is no data for Turkey regarding one indicator in this calculation, it will not be compared with the others in the first graph. The second graph shows the comparison of the data with Turkey with the above indicator excluded from the calculation. The results of the survey show that the lowest political participation of young people is in Turkey and Albania, while the highest level exists in Montenegro which is due to the highest level of online tool for information and participation in decision-making of government and parliament and local municipalities.

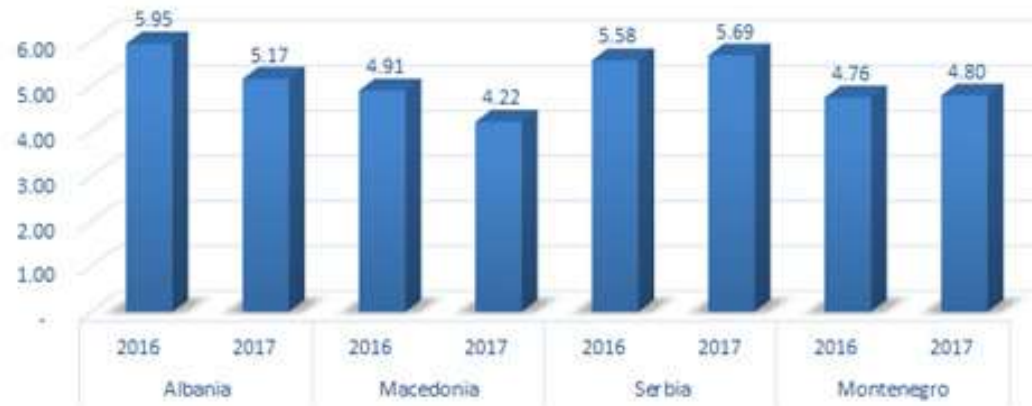
However, the results show that youth participation in politics is at a low level in all participating countries. There is a need to increase participation of young people in executive level positions with the aim of participating in decision-making processes. Research has shown that the countries of the Western Balkans as well as Turkey do not have young government ministers. Also, there are no young deputy ministers in the governments of the participating countries, or the situation is that they have 5 % of them in Montenegro. The similar situation is with young MPs, as well as young mayors.

Young representatives in official bodies



Economic participation index

Economic participation dimension



The data presented in the above graph are related to the economic participation dimension. The data are collected using official data from the respective institutions for the period 2016-2017. There are no available data for Turkey, because they have no available statistics for several indicators. There are no data for Montenegro regarding Young people that started their own business with the financial support of the state for 2016 and 2017, whereas the same data is unavailable for Turkey as well as the data regarding Long-term youth unemployment rate and Youth Labor force participation rate for 2017.

The participation of youth in Albania in the observed period is decreasing which is mostly influenced by the lack of financial support for young people who want to start their own business, since the Commission in charge for selection of beneficiaries of start-up grants was still evaluating the project proposals and had not selected any beneficiaries at the time of publishing of this report. Macedonia had the same problem as Albania, since during 2017 the financial support for young people who wanted to start their own business was missing, because of the political changes which happened during 2016. Montenegro and Serbia demonstrated a slight increase during the years. Macedonia and Albania have the highest NEET rate of youth with almost over 30 % (Macedonia –31,3 %, Albania –29,7 %). In Serbia and Turkey, NEET rate slightly decreased in 2017 when compared to 2016, but it is still higher than it is in Europe, where NEET rate is 17,2 %.

The unemployment rate of young people in the observed period is the highest in Macedonia (40.6 % in 2016 and 39.2 % in 2017), while the lowest is in Turkey (18.5 % in 2016, 20.8 % in 2017). The long-term unemployment rate has dropped slightly in the observed period in Albania, Macedonia and Serbia but it is still very high.

Social participation index

Social Participation dimension still presents the main obstacle in the calculation of the YPI, since most of the countries do not have available statistics for the same indicators. The data obtained from the respective institutions are not available or do not match indicators target group, and in that way do not reflect an overall view of the situation in many cases.

According to the available data, the highest number of young people living at risk of poverty is in Serbia (30.3 %). Also, there is a significant increase in the number of young people in prison in Albania (36.54 % in 2016 and 46 % in 2017). Serbia also has a high youth rate in prisons (32.7 % in 2016 and 27.7 % in 2017). A great number of young people in prison indicates a serious problem in society. The lowest rate of young people in prison is in Macedonia, 0.2 %.

Regarding young people's education, it should be noted that Montenegro has the highest percentage of young people who dropped out of secondary education (5.5 %). According to the available data, the lowest dropout rate of young people from secondary education is in Serbia with 1.1 % in 2016 and 1.3 % in 2017.

In Albania, the majority of young people are involved in tertiary education (91.5 %). In Serbia, on the other hand, this number has dropped significantly from 50.7 % in 2016 to 28.2 % in 2017 which is the result of changing the methodology for calculation of the official statistics in this field. It should be noted that the highest rate of young people graduating from tertiary education is in Albania – 25.19 % while this rate is the lowest in Macedonia – 11.5 % and Serbia – 19.7 %. Since Turkey and Albania have different educational systems than other countries, it was difficult to compare this kind of data.

*National Institute of Statistics in Albania does not calculate the dropout from secondary education, only early leavers from education and training for young people of age of 18-24, that have finished primary education and lower education and have not continued any other education at all.

**Nacional Office for Statistic Serbia – during 2017 the methodology in the calculation of Young people enrolled in tertiary education changed. The age group of young people has been adjusted to the EU statistics and now young people are the ones between 19-24 (unlike 19-29 as it was till 2017)

Social Participation dimension for 2016		Young people at risk of poverty	Young people in prisons	Young people part of social welfare system	Dropout from the secondary education	Young people enrolled in tertiary education	Young people graduated from tertiary education
Albania	DATA	(Poor people) 15.0%	36.54%		3.70*%	90.50%	21.48%
	YEAR	2012	2016		2015-2016	2015-2016	2015-2016
Macedonia	DATA	(Poor people) 24.8%	0.20%				
	YEAR	2016	2016				
Monte negro	DATA		31.1%		5.5%	33.9%	12.86%
	YEAR		2016		2015-2016	2015-2016	2015-2016
Serbia	DATA	30.3%	32.7%	18.97%	1.1%	50.7%**	20.0%
	YEAR	2016	2016	2016	2015-2016	2015-2016	2015-2016
Turkey	DATA	27.10%	63.00%			40.53%	
	YEAR	2013	2016			2015-2016	
Social Participation dimension for 2017		Young people at risk of poverty	Young people in prisons	Young people part of social welfare system	Dropout from the secondary education	Young people enrolled in tertiary education	Young people graduated from tertiary education
Albania	DATA		46.00%		3.35*%	91.5%	25.19%
	YEAR		2017		2016-2017	2016-2017	2016-2017
Macedonia	DATA				2.3%	28.9%	11.5%
	YEAR				2016-2017	2016-2017	2016-2017
Monte negro	DATA		33.2%		5.4%	34.5%	14.51%
	YEAR		2017		2016-2017	2016-2017	2016-2017
Serbia	DATA		27.7	18.16%	1.3%	28.20%	19.70%
	YEAR		2017	2017	2016-2017	2016-2017	2016-2017
Turkey	DATA					42.43%	
	YEAR					2017	

Comparison of the data

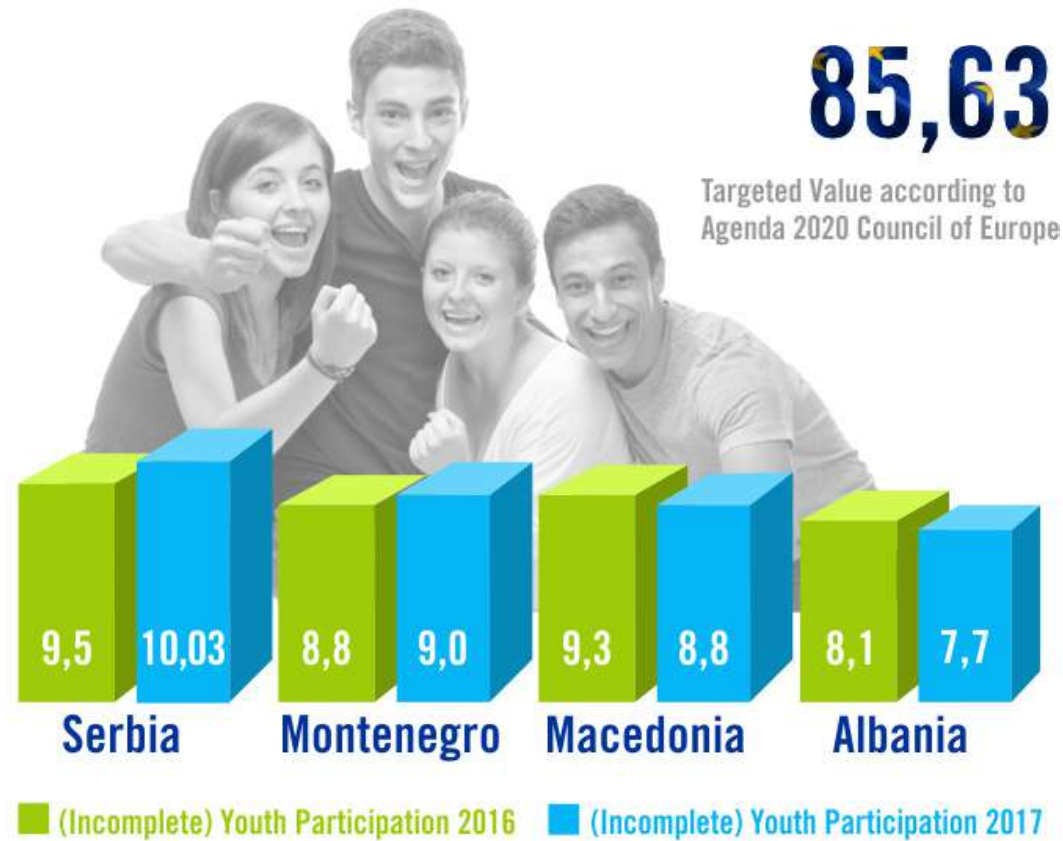
Tracking of data is only useful if we have a desired outcome or a comparable result. The table below shows the level of youth participation across the available indicators with the aim to compare the results for each country. The policy researchers engaged in this project have proposed the targeted percentages, which stand for the desired outcome for the region. For the purpose of the targeted values, the percentage reached in the developed countries is used as an example for each indicator, or a desirable state in the opinion of researchers. In addition, when it comes to the economic participation dimension, targeted values from the EU 2020 Strategy are used.

Political Participation	Target percentage	Economic Participation	Target Percentage
Young government ministers	5 %	NEET rate	15 %
Young MPs	12.3 % (Sweden)	Youth unemployment rate	19 %
Young mayors	5 %	Long-term youth unemployment rate	4 %
Young government deputy ministers	10 %	Youth Labor force participation rate	57 %
On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of government and parliament	100 %	Youth Employment rate	75 %
On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of municipalities	100 %	Young people that started their own business with the financial support of the state	60 %
Existence of youth network – at local levels	100 %	Self-employed young people	30 %
Existence of youth networks – at the national level	100 %		
Targeted index	43.23	Targeted index	48.4

Based on the available data presented in the previous pages, the Youth Participation Index¹ related to Political and Economic Participation has been created. The Youth Participation Index provides the possibility to summarize complex, multidimensional data into one comprehensive number per county. Considering that all the data should have their purpose, the table below presents the targeted percentage of each observed indicator. Targeted political participation indicators are set according to the opinion that young people as a vulnerable group should have at least 5 % of representatives in decision-making structures. Targeted economic participation indicators are set using European values or targeted figures by Europe 2020 Strategy. As it is shown, the targeted index of political participation is 43.23, whereas the targeted index for economic participation is 48.4. Summarizing those two dimensions, the targeted Incomplete Youth Participation Index should be **91.63**.

¹ The Youth Participation Index is incomplete due to missing Social participation index

Youth Participation Index



The calculation of the index depends on the available data. Since two countries have unavailable data for several indicators, the only possible calculation is for 4 countries which have available data for almost all indicators for political and economic participation.

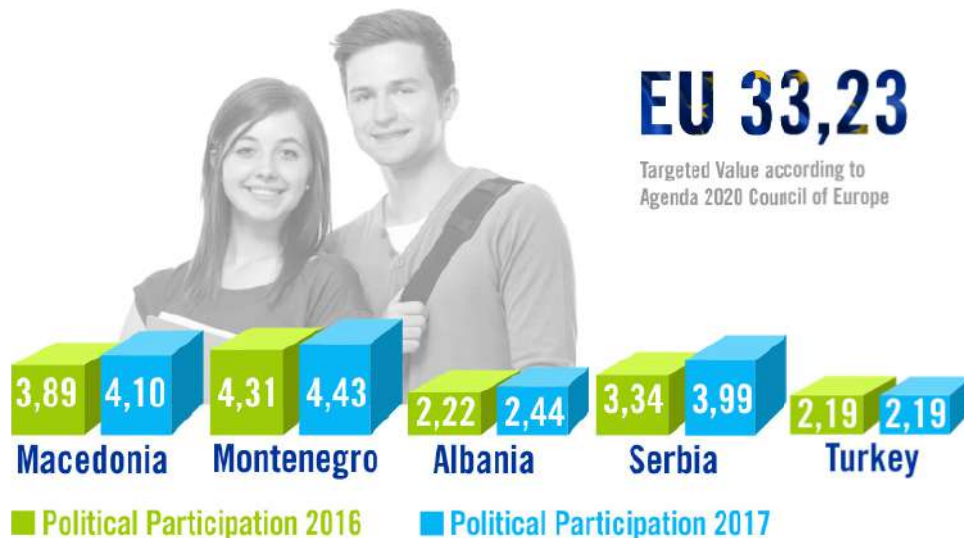
There are available data as regards political participation indicators for 4 countries. When it comes to economic participation, three countries have all the necessary data. For social participation, as it is previously mentioned, the data are mostly unavailable. Incomplete Youth Participation Index, which is shown below, is calculated based on the available data without one indicator in the economic participation dimension with the aim to include Montenegro. According to this, the targeted value is calculated in the same way. Considering all available data, incomplete youth participation index shows the big discrepancy between the current states in those four countries in relation to the targeted values. Macedonia and Montenegro have almost the same result, while Serbia has slightly better score in 2017, which is mostly the result of more data in the economic dimension.

Economic Participation Index



The data presented in the graph are shown without one indicator which is not available in Montenegro as regards the comparison.

Political Participation Index



The data presented in the graph are shown without one indicator which is not available in Turkey as regards the comparison.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Since 2016, YBH4WBT Network has monitored the position of young people in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey and published Youth Participation Index (YPI). Based on the results of the YPI, we can see that youth in our region can be identified as a vulnerable group and that they face major challenges, such as high unemployment rates, high NEET rates, low youth participation rates, but also certain specific problems such as brain drain, political instability and the lack of data. Therefore, cooperation between all stakeholders is vital in order to create different measures targeting the actual needs of young people, but also in order to exchange examples of good practice which have been already created and implemented in our countries.

It is important to point out that in some countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey where YPI is implemented, official surveys that provide more information about the position of young people in these countries no longer exist. At the same time, there is a particular emphasis on the lack of regional research and data which is comparable. Therefore, YPI has a special value because it allows analysis and comparison of key indicators of youth participation in all three dimensions: political, economic and social.

Findings for all three dimensions show great discrepancies in relation to the targeted values defined by the Europe 2020 Strategy. The figures show a big discrepancy between the current and targeted values, and this should initiate changes in this field. Bearing all this in mind, the next steps should be advocacy activities with the focus in improving two main issues: **lack of data** and **low level of youth participation**.

I Lack of data

YPI represents a unique combination of indicators¹ which contain the same type of data from respective countries. It allows data to be compared among countries. The first challenge of the process of Youth Participation Index structuring was to find comparable indicators in each country.. The second challenge during this process was how to find the right data in order to fit the requested form, which means to refer to the respective age group and to use the same methodology in the calculation. During the process of collecting data, the countries from the Western Balkans are observed to have more or less the same official methodologies, unlike Turkey which is using a different one, which resulted in a significant amount of unavailable data from Turkey. The rest of the unavailable data is mostly from Macedonia, considering that their last Census was conducted in 2002. The YPI shows that the biggest problem regarding data collection is related to the social dimension, where researchers could not identify 8 key indicators which would be comparable in all countries.

“Participation is a fundamental right. It is one of the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that has been reiterated in many other Conventions and Declarations. Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities, helping them to learn vital life-skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and to promote positive civic action. To participate effectively, young people must be given the proper tools, such as information, education about and access to their civil rights.”

¹ The indicators for three dimension of Youth Participation Index are presented on the 4th page of this document

Accordingly, the report indicates that there are no public data regarding vulnerable groups of young people in each country such as: youth at risk of poverty, young people in the social welfare system, young people who are in prison, etc.

Changing the methodology and adjusting the data are some of the major requests from the EU to all the countries in the pre-accession phase in order to become members of the EU¹. EU rules require that Member States, and candidate countries as well, are able to produce statistics based on professional independence, impartiality, reliability, transparency and confidentiality. Common rules are provided for the methodology, production and dissemination of statistical information. Only Montenegro and Turkey opened the Chapter 18 regarding statistics and started with the adjustment of methodology, while Serbia, Macedonia and Albania have not even opened this Chapter nor started with this process at the time of publishing of our report.

Researchers, in line with the key findings, pointed to some of the challenges they faced:

1. Lack of publicly available data, especially youth sensitive data – collecting the data meant sending official requests to institutions and depended on their willingness to share the data.
2. No updated and systematic data collection methods, which means that most of the countries do not have systematic data collection methods, and do not publish data regularly. Some of the data could be found for 2012 and after that period the country has not disclosed data any more.
3. The official statistics of regional countries does not match with the EUROSTAT² which made the data collection and comparison more complex.

Recommendations:

1. **The institutions are to start collecting youth sensible data in the field of economic, social and political participation for the category of youth as legally defined.**

Systematically collected data are the basis for creating high quality support measures for youth, especially vulnerable groups of young people. In particular, the system of collecting and processing data relating to the social dimension of youth participation need to be significantly improved in accordance with the defined indicators within EUROSTAT. Therefore, the YBH4WBT Network insists that institutions responsible for collecting and processing data (the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, the Institute of Statistics in Albania - INSTAT, the Statistical Office of Montenegro - MONSTAT, the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia and Turkish Statistical Institute - TurkStat) begin to collect data according to the instruction of EUROSTAT³, with special emphasis on the following data:

Political dimension

1. The age and gender of Members of Parliament
2. The age and gender of Ministries and Deputy Ministries in Government
3. The age and gender of mayors

1 Chapters of the acquis: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/chapters-of-the-acquis_en

2 Eurostat is the statistical office of the European Union situated in Luxembourg. Its mission is to provide high quality statistics for Europe. Collecting data for EMU and developing statistical systems in candidate countries for EU membership are more important part of the work. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

3 <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth>

Economic dimension

1. Long-term youth unemployment rate
2. Young people that started their own business with the financial support of the state
3. Self-employed young people

Social dimension

1. Young people at risk of poverty
2. Young people part of social welfare system
3. Young people in prisons
4. Dropout from secondary education

2. Advocate to the Government to open negotiating Chapter 18 – Statistics in the enlargement process as soon as possible and initiate and implement legislative and institutional reforms in accordance with the Progress Report.

Negotiations under Chapter 18, which relate to statistics, include the harmonization of the legal regulations of the candidate country with the EU *acquis communautaire*. This chapter is considered very important since the positive changes resulting from a productive negotiation process will provide better quality, availability and credibility of data. Reliable and comparable statistics are preconditions for successful negotiation.

Having this in mind, all participating countries should start with this process as soon as possible. However, reliable data are not the only request, but also data which are publicly and easily available. Unfortunately, the chapter regarding statistics has not been opened in Albania, Serbia and Macedonia yet, while Turkey and Montenegro must implement comprehensive legislative and institutional reforms to successfully close this chapter, according to the Progress report.

II Low level of youth participation

Based on the results of the YPI, the participation of young people in the decision-making process is extremely low in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey. This is especially reflected in the analysis of the political participation of young people where the index in our region ranges from 2.19 in Turkey to 4.43 in Montenegro, which is extremely low having in mind that the target value is 33.23.

One of the consequences of this low value is a small percentage of young people in high-ranking positions, especially decision-makers, such as ministers, deputy ministers, mayors, etc. Also in all countries, there are still no fully developed online tools for information and participation at the national level as well as at the local levels. Quality information, especially through online mechanisms that are a common way of communication among young people, is the first and basic precondition for the participation of all citizens including young people.

On the other hand, it is necessary to build concrete mechanisms that will ensure quality participation of young people at the national and local levels.

Recommendations:

1. The transparency of information and the establishment of better communication between the state institutions and young people at the national and local levels must be improved.

The countries should strive towards ensuring on-line tools for information and participation of youth in decision-making of government, parliament and municipalities. The first step in encouraging youth participation is to provide information that is publicly available through online tools, such as websites, social networks, etc. Consequently, it is necessary for all municipalities to have an online presentation and to publish information in a transparent manner. At the same time, when it comes to the national level, government and parliament as well need to provide information transparent via online tools.

It is very important that information is published in accordance with a culture of communication tailored to each target group. Bearing in mind that young people mostly use social networks as channels of communication, it is necessary that all relevant institutions to have official websites, as well as Facebook and Twitter accounts. This is a prerequisite for establishing communication between decision-makers and citizens, including young people.

2. Establishment of youth institutional network (councils/parliaments/unions) which ensures the participation of young people in the decision-making process at national and local levels

Young people who have the opportunity to access information have the power to participate in decision-making process and are influential in advocating for the issues which are important to them. When youth participation at the national level is concerned, we have pointed out that in Albania and Turkey there are no developed mechanisms for involving young people in the decision-making process. At the same time, in all countries, mechanisms for youth participation at the local level have not been fully developed. There are data that prove the existence of youth networks in a few countries, especially at the national level. However, the number of young people who participate as decision-makers is still very low.

Therefore, one of the first actions that should be addressed is to advocate for the opportunity to build youth councils, parliament and unions in order to ensure the participation of young people in the decision-making process.

3. Youth Bank Hub has been recognized as one of the most effective solutions for increasing participation of young people at local levels.

It is necessary to change the paradigm that young people are a big problem in this region and create enabling environments where youth are a part of the solution. Youth participation in local development processes encourages young people to recognize community issues and engage in their resolution and reduce their vulnerability to economic, political and social problems.

One of the most effective models of youth participation at the local level is YouthBank model, as a unique programme that empowers young people to identify the key issues that affect their lives, and inspires them to make changes. Youth banks are local organizations of young people who design and run their own projects by themselves but also support other youth local initiatives in fundraising, project managing and promotion of their projects. The particular value of the model is that it brings together local municipalities, business sector and young people. Young people should be recognized as partners of local self-government. A comprehensive and systematic approach is needed, allowing all relevant actors to be involved in creating conditions for youth development and the creation, implementation and monitoring of local youth policies.

The YouthBank model is being used in 26 countries. The network provides support for the model in order to be implemented to Montenegro and Albania.



YouthBankHub

WESTERN BALKAN AND TURKEY



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