

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



CONTRIBUTION OF
NON-PROGRAMME COUNTRIES TO EU YOUTH WIKI
CHAPTER 5: PARTICIPATION
MONTENEGRO

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5.1 GENERAL CONTEXT

The Republic of Montenegro is situated in South-Eastern Europe, bordering Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and Albania, and has approximately 630 000 inhabitants.¹ Following the restoration of independence in 2006, Montenegro formally joined the international community as the 192nd member of the United Nations on 28 June 2006 and as the 47th member of the Council of Europe on 11 May 2007. The country formally applied for membership of the European Union in December 2008; two years later, it obtained the status of candidate country and in 2019 Montenegro leads as regards the number of negotiation chapters open (32 chapters out of 33) in comparison with the other candidate countries in the Western Balkans region. In mid-2017, Montenegro became the 29th member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Given the above, it is clear that the framework for progress and development of the state is determined by the obligations stemming from the process of Euro-Atlantic integration.

5.1.1. MAIN CONCEPTS

There are several normative and policy documents defining (more or less directly) the context and concept of youth participation. In the most general note, Montenegro has consented to protect and promote basic human rights for children through the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

The Constitution of the Republic of Montenegro (2007),² furthermore, guarantees human rights and liberties i.e.: a) “freedom of assembly”, stipulating that “the freedom of peaceful assembly, without approval, with prior notification of the competent authority shall be guaranteed” (Article 52/2); and b) “freedom of association”, stating that “the freedom of political, trade union and other association and action, without approval, by the registration with the competent authority, shall be guaranteed” (Article 53/2). No one shall be forced to become a member of an association. The state supports political and other associations when there is a public interest to do so.

The Law on Local Self-Government³ deals with the issue of citizen participation at the local level, and prescribes that citizens shall participate in decision-making processes relating to their needs and interests, directly and through freely elected representatives in local self-government bodies. According to this law (Article 1/1), local self-government encompasses the right of citizens and local self-government bodies to regulate and manage certain public and other affairs, within the limits set by the law, on the basis of their own responsibility and in the interest of the local population.

¹ According to Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Montenegro, Monstat 2011.

² The Constitution of the Republic of Montenegro (2007) (Ustav Republike Crne Gore (2007)), available at www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Montenegro_2007.pdf.

³ The Law on Local Self-Government (Official Gazette No. 002/1); Zakon o lokalnoj samoupravi (Službeni list Crne Gore, broj 002/18).

The Law on Youth (2019, Article 5)⁴ defines youth participation as one of the areas of public interest in terms of “encouraging the proactive participation of young people in the creation and implementation of youth policy at the state and local level” and “encouraging the involvement of youth in non-formal education”. Youth participation represents a broader construct, not only regarding participation in decision making, but also participation in creating solutions, initiating solutions, participating in all phases of active decision making. According to this law (Article 7), youth policy is based on the principles of equality, volunteerism, solidarity, active participation and information for young people. Active participation of young people means that “youth actively participate in the process of organising and implementing the programmes in the field of youth policy through the co-ordination of the development of interdisciplinary partnerships, co-operation between the young people and the young people in planning and conducting the youth affairs” (Article 11).

Additional information on legal framework for youth participation is given in section 5.3.

The Youth Strategy 2017-2021⁵ defines youth participation as social involvement and youth activism, active participation of young people in solving issues that are relevant to them as well as decision making both in local communities and at the state level. This social involvement is being achieved through engagement in political parties, civil society organisations, and independent youth associations and volunteer work or through other forms of formal and non-formal civic associations. The strategy recognises **two forms** of youth/citizens participation, i.e. the “prescribed” or “formal” participation through mechanisms and in opportunities offered and requested by the government (e.g. public discussions and consultations, participation in work groups, councils and the like), and “self-initiated” forms of participation, which are based on citizens’ initiative and motivation.

Youth participation is undoubtedly a very important factor in the process of **democratisation and socio-economic development of Montenegro**, especially taking into account that young people aged 15-29 represent 23.2% of the total Montenegrin population. In proportion to their numbers, young people should be the main pillar of the development of the society, and for this reason they should be enabled to participate actively. However, despite the legal framework providing a setting for active youth participation, there are various hindering factors including low information and motivation of youth.

⁴ The Law on Youth, Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 025/19 of 30 April 2019 and Revision of the Law on Youth No. 027/19 of 17 May 2019 (Zakon o mladima, “Službeni list Crne Gore, broj No. 025/19 od 30.04.2019.”, i Ispravka zakona o mladima br. 027/19 od 17.05.2019).

⁵ Ministry of Education, Ministry of Sports and Youth, United Nations in Montenegro (2016), Youth Strategy 2017-2021, Podgorica (Ministarstvo prosvjete, Ministarstvo sporta, Ujedinjene nacije u Crnoj Gori, Strategija za mlade 2017-2021, Podgorica), available at www.un.org.me/Library/Youth-Empowerment/1a%20Youth%20Strategy%202017-2021.pdf.

Active democratisation of Montenegrin society furthermore implies the existence of active civil participation. The National Human Development Report⁶ remarks that, at the community or society level, citizens of Montenegro do not believe that individuals can influence decision making, so their level of participation in non-governmental organisations, associations, clubs and other forms of civil society is relatively low.

The Civil Participation Index (2014) of young people in Montenegro (18-35) is 0.38 and marks a drop when compared to 2010, but it is still slightly higher in comparison with other age groups. 54% of young people in Montenegro believe that it is impossible to influence the processes in the community/state and 66% believe that they cannot influence decision-making processes. The results of consultations with young people⁷ reflect their opinion on current possibilities for youth participation, which is the highest in the family (although they are partially hindered even there); they were less involved in the decision making in their local communities (62.2%), the municipalities (72.4%) and in the state (70.7%). The data on youth participation⁸ furthermore reveal that each mechanism for participation of citizens is unknown to at least half of the young respondents. It points out the possibility that there is a certain lack of interest among young people to formalise their activism through establishing youth organisations, because they believe that this framework would not offer them anything new or they are now aware of the existence of that possibility, so only one in 10 young respondents claimed to know how a youth organisation is established. On the other hand, 91% of young people believe that the world would be a better place if everyone participated in community development. More than 90% of young people believe that they should be involved in decision making at all levels, and they think they could contribute the most in the area of human rights, local community development, economy, politics and culture. 40% of young people, however, believe that youth should not be actively involved in politics.⁹

5.1.2. INSTITUTIONS OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

The country's constitutional structure (e.g. if it is a centralised or a federal system; if it is a presidential democracy, a parliamentary democracy, constitutional monarchy etc.): Montenegro is a parliamentary state. The Constitution of the Republic of Montenegro (2007)¹⁰ defines basic provisions on the type of government envisioned stating that Montenegro is an independent and sovereign state, with a republican form of government. According to the Article 1 of the Constitution, Montenegro is 'an independent and sovereign state, with a republican form of government'. Montenegro is also defined as 'a civil, democratic, environmental and the state of social justice, based on the rule of law'.

⁶ UNDP, Human Development Report – Montenegro, Diversities potential for development, available at www.undp.org.me/.

⁷ Source: Youth Strategy 2017-2021, 2016: 40.

⁸ Source: Youth Strategy 2017-2021, 2016: 39.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Montenegro's Constitution of 2007 (Ustav Crne Gore, 2007), available at <https://www.paragraf.me/propisi-crnegore/ustav-crne-gore.html>.

Its main representative institutions at the national/federal (e.g. parliament, parliamentary assembly, house of representatives), regional (e.g. regional assembly) and local level (e.g. mayoral office, municipal council, local council etc.): The Constitution of the Republic of Montenegro (2007) defines the division of powers (Article 11), establishing that power shall be regulated following the principle of the division of powers into the legislative, executive and judicial. The legislative power shall be exercised by the parliament,¹¹ the executive power by the government¹² and the judicial by the courts. The parliament consists of deputies elected by direct secret ballot by the citizens, on the basis of universal and equal suffrage. The structure of parliament is unicameral. The power is limited by the constitution and the law. The relationship between powers shall be based on balance and mutual control. Montenegro is represented by the President of Montenegro, and constitutionality and legality protected by the Constitutional Court of Montenegro.¹³

• **The Law on Local Self-Government**¹⁴ (Article 2) states that “a local self-government is realised in the different units of local self-government, including: the municipality; the municipality within the Capital City; the Capital city; and the Capital (hereinafter: the municipality), terminology used to identify different administrative entities”. Local self-government is realised “on the principles of democracy, equality, decentralisation, depolitisation, autonomy, legality, professionalism, efficiency of the work of local self-government bodies and mutual co-operation between the State and the municipality” (Article 3). In the performance of local government affairs, the municipality is independent and its rights cannot be deprived or limited by the acts of state bodies, except in cases and under the conditions laid down by law, in accordance with the Constitution (Article 9). In accordance with the same law, the municipal bodies are:

- a) the municipal assembly (hereinafter: the assembly) – the representative body of the citizens of the municipality. The elections for the assembly are announced by the president of the state (Article 36). The mandate of the assembly lasts for four years (Article 37). The president of the assembly from the ranks of councillors is elected by the assembly, at the proposal of one third of the councillors, by a majority of votes of the total number of councillors. The mandate of the president of the assembly takes as long as the mandate of the assembly. The function of the president of the assembly is professional. The manner and procedure for election of the president of the assembly is regulated by the statute of the municipality.
- b) The president of the municipality – the executive body of the municipality. The function of the president of the municipality is professional. The president of the municipality is elected for a period of four years. A person who meets the conditions for election of councillors may be

¹¹ Parliament of Montenegro (Skupština Crne Gore), available at http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2385_B.htm, last accessed 28 June 2019.

¹² Official website of the Government of Montenegro (Vlada Crne Gore), available at www.gov.me/en/homepage?alphabet=lat, last accessed 28 June 2019.

¹³ Official website of the Constitutional Court of Montenegro (Ustavni sud Crne Gore), available at: www.ustavnisud.me/ustavnisud/index.php, last accessed 20 June 2019.

¹⁴ The Law on Local Self-Government (Official Gazette No. 002/1); Zakon o lokalnoj samoupravi (Službeni list Crne Gore, broj 002/18).

elected as president of the municipality, in accordance with the law governing the election of councillors and deputies. The right to nominate a candidate for the president of a municipality has at least one third of the councillors (Article 55).

The main legal principles concerning elections, such as whether voting is compulsory and how the vote is cast (by ballot, by post, by proxy etc.): Montenegro's constitution (2007) defines "electoral right" within the wider scope of political rights and liberties (Article 45/3), stating that: "The electoral right shall be exercised in elections; the electoral right shall be general and equal; elections shall be free and direct, by secret ballot."

- **Voting system:** Voting in Montenegro is not compulsory.
 - **Electoral Law:**¹⁵ 18 February 1998, last amended on 21 March 2014.
 - **Mode of designation:** directly elected
 - **Constituencies:** One nationwide constituency of 81 seats.
 - **Proportional:** Party-list system (closed list): Political parties (independently or in coalitions) or groups of citizens submit a single election list. Seats are attributed according to the highest average system, using the d'Hondt system. Parties or groups which obtain at least 3% of the total valid votes are entitled to parliamentary representation.
- **Special thresholds:**
1. For election lists for representatives of certain minority groups or communities, as specified in the election application or title of the electoral list: In the event that none of them surpasses the 3% threshold but they win separately at least 0.7% of the valid votes, they are entitled to win up to three seats as a single (collective) electoral list based on the total number of valid votes that they collectively win. This special threshold applies to electoral lists representing the same minority groups or communities that account for up to 15% of the total population in the electoral constituency based on the latest census.
 2. For electoral lists representing Croatians in Montenegro, in cases where none of the candidates wins 3% of the valid votes, or separately wins at least 0.7% of the valid votes, the most successful list that obtains no less than 0.35% of valid votes shall be entitled to one seat.

Vacancies arising between general elections are filled through "next-in-line" candidates from the same party. If the term of office ends for an MP of the less represented gender, the next candidate on the electoral list of the less represented gender shall be elected to replace the MP.

Voter requirements: citizenship of Montenegro (including naturalised citizens); residence in the country for at least 24 months prior to election; disqualifications: insanity/mental illness, undocumented immigrants.

5.2 YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

5.2.1. YOUNG PEOPLE AS VOTERS

¹⁵ Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, <http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2385.htm>, last accessed 15 July 2019.

The voting age limit for voting in the elections of the country's representative democracy institutions at all levels:

Apart from other electoral rights, the formal rights and obligations of young people are regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Montenegro (2007) (the Constitution). Article 45/3 of the Constitution states that the right to elect and stand for elections shall be granted to every citizen of Montenegro of 18 years of age and above with at least a two-year residence in Montenegro. The voting age of young people is also regulated by the Electoral Law (1998, last amended in 2014), apart from other voter requirements (see table above).

If there are imminent plans to lower the voting age limit, or if the age limit has been lowered recently (i.e. after 2000) please elaborate here. N/A

Any special provisions for young people in the electoral law and/or rules. N/A

The turnout of young people in the latest national/federal, regional, local and European Parliament elections and compare it to the overall population turnout:

Data on youth participation in parliamentary elections in 2016 is not currently available, but general participation in the parliamentary election in 2012 was 70.59% of registered voters.¹⁶ The results of the Youth Study in Montenegro (2018: 35)¹⁷ show that young people in general have very little interest in politics, whether local or regional or international political events. At a general level, 62.7% of young people surveyed are not interested in politics at all. A closer look at the results shows that young people are somewhat more interested in local and regional politics, but as political developments move away from the national level, that little interest is already diminished.

5.2.2. YOUNG PEOPLE AS POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES

Young people as members of political parties, including any top-level legislation on party youth wings where available: Montenegro has a multi-party system and usually, the political parties have to work with each other to form coalition governments. Every political party has a youth branch but updated systematised data on youth representation in these structures is not currently available.

Young people as candidates in federal/national, regional, local and European elections for securing a position in a representative assembly or in an elected public office position (e.g. mayor, head of regional government, head of state): The formal right of young people as political representatives in a unicameral parliament includes a candidacy age of 18,¹⁸ as previously

¹⁶ Youth Bank Hubs in Western Balkans and Turkey: Political, social and economic participation of youth in Montenegro, Baseline study, National Report – Montenegro (2018: 14), available at [Baseline-study-PRIMA.pdf](#).

¹⁷ The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), “FES Youth Studies Southeast Europe 2018/2019”, Youth study Montenegro 2018/2019, by Petar Đukanović, available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/15267.pdf>.

¹⁸ Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, available at http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2385_B.htm, last accessed 15 July 2019.

mentioned. There is neither a quota of seats reserved for young people, nor existing provisions aimed at facilitating young people standing as political candidates.

Young people as elected representatives (i.e. elected in a representative assembly): As a result of the parliamentary elections in 2016 the Assembly of Montenegro has the biggest number of MPs under the age of 30 years so far. The information regarding the composition of the Government of Montenegro (available on the official website of the government) reveals that the current government of Prime Minister Dusko Markovic has no ministers who are younger than 30 years of age.

5.3 YOUTH REPRESENTATION BODIES

Although Montenegro is one of the youngest countries in Europe, its existing models of youth involvement are diverse, regardless of the fact that they are still at the development stage. [The Youth Strategy 2017-2021](#)¹⁹ (Outcome C, 2016: 38) states that: “Young people are active citizens, involved, motivated, proactive and participate in decision-making and community development processes, in creation of policies and their implementation.” Measures anticipated for fulfilment of this objective are: “development of youth participation culture; putting in place mechanisms/systems for fostering activism; supporting youth organising and youth networking” (2016: 25). The strategy (2016: 15) sets “participatory principle” as one of its key principles stating that: “Youth policy is devised, developed, implemented, monitored and its achievements are evaluated with concrete participation of young people and with involvement of all interested parties.”

5.3.1. YOUTH PARLIAMENT

There is no youth parliament in Montenegro.

The Children’s Parliament²⁰ is organised by the Parliament of Montenegro and the NGO Centre for the Rights of the Child. Sessions take place on an annual basis, on the occasion of the date of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (20 November). The first session was held in 2009. Members of the Children’s Parliament are primary and secondary school students, representatives of local children’s parliaments. Having in mind that this parliament also engages adolescents aged from 15-18, the Ministry of Sports and Youth supported the annual assembly of the Children’s Parliament in 2018.

This project is dedicated to the overall affirmation of children’s rights to participation and advocacy, as significant social needs and values. It is one of the ways of connecting the young population with the parliament. At the same time, it is a mechanism for promoting children’s rights

¹⁹ Ministry of Education, Ministry of Sports and Youth, United Nations in Montenegro (2016), Youth Strategy 2017-2021, Podgorica (Ministarstvo prosvjete, Ministarstvo sporta, Ujedinjene nacije u Crnoj Gori, Strategija za mlade 2017-2021, Podgorica), available at www.un.org.me/Library/Youth-Empowerment/1a%20Youth%20Strategy%202017-2021.pdf.

²⁰ Source: Parliament of Montenegro official website, Children’s Parliament (Dječji parlament), available at: <http://skupstina.me/index.php/me/gradani/djecji-parlament>, last accessed 21 June 2019.

and providing the opportunity to hear their voice in the highest legislature. In this way, the project creates the possibility for children to give their assessment on the respect of human rights in the family, school and community, and to point to the problems and need to be involved in decision-making processes concerning children's rights. In addition, pupils from different cities and regions have the opportunity to engage and promote the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child pointing out the need to respect the standards that it prescribes. Representatives of the parliament and ministers in the Government of Montenegro attend the sessions of the Children's Parliament (in the Plenary Room of the parliament) together with mayors, correspondents and others.

5.3.2. YOUTH COUNCILS AND/OR YOUTH ADVISORY BOARDS

There is a legal framework for establishment of the National and Local Youth Councils in Montenegro. However, there is currently no National Youth Council, although there are several local youth councils and other forms of representative youth assemblies (e.g. councils and unions). These are **not** part of the country's constitutional order and, consequently, decisions taken in them do not have any legal implications. However, they serve various functions, such as the representation, consultation and education of young people.

The National Youth Council

The Law on Youth (2019) stipulates that: "In order to encourage the development of youth policy, the Ministry is forming the (National) Youth Council, as an expert and advisory body" (Article 16).

- **Structure**

The National Youth Council of Montenegro (COF) existed during the period of validity of the first youth strategy and action plan in Montenegro (National Youth Action Plan 2006-2011). The creation of COF was initiated in October 2010, further supported in June 2011 and completed in 2012. As an umbrella organisation, COF has been involved in all important policy-making processes and consultations in the country. COF was not a member of the European Youth Forum.

- **Composition**

The Law on Youth (2019, Article 16), defines the scope of representation within the national Youth Council stating that the Youth Council has a president and eight members. The president and three members are proposed by the ministry, and one member is nominated by the state administration bodies competent for labour and education, and these are elected for a period of four years. One member of the Youth Council is a representative of legal persons who manage youth services, and is elected for a period of one year, through a public call published by the ministry. A representative association of non-governmental organisations implementing the youth policy is proposed by two members of the Youth Council, out of which at least one is from the ranks of young people, and is elected for a period of one year. If a representative association of non-governmental organisations implementing youth policies has not been formed, two members of the Youth Council, among them at least one of the young people, are proposed by non-governmental organisations implementing the youth policy for a period of one year. Members of the Youth Council nominated by non-governmental organisations implementing the youth policy are those who have the support of the

largest number of non-governmental organisations and are selected through the public call launched by the ministry. The conditions, method and procedure for selection of members of the Youth Council, proposed by the representative association of non-governmental organisations that implement youth policy, non-governmental organisations that implement youth policy and the member of the council who is a representative of legal entities that manage youth services, are prescribed by the ministry.

- **Role and responsibilities**

According to the Law on Youth (2019), competences of the Youth Council are: “to make proposals for the improvement of youth policy; give suggestions in the process of preparing the strategy; delegate its representative to participate in the process of law drafting in the areas in which matters are settled of importance for young people; monitor the situation of young people and propose measures for their improvement; and, at the request of the Minister of Sports, give opinion on other issues of importance to young people”. Administrative and technical tasks for the work of the Youth Council are carried out by the ministry.

- **Funding**

The Act on establishment of the Youth Council regulates the way of work and other issues of importance for the work of the Council (the Law on Youth 2019).

Local Youth Council

- **Structure**

The Local Youth Council is an independent and advisory body that is established by the competent municipal body, with the goals of promoting and improving the development of youth policy, monitoring and evaluating the municipal strategy, strengthening co-operation and improving the position of young people at the local level. Out of all Montenegrin municipalities, only the capital city, Podgorica, has a local youth council. Although they are not recognised by the Law on Youth, there are local youth-led councils in the municipalities of Berane, Pljevlja and Cetinje, as youth representative bodies that represent the interests of young people in local government.

- **Composition**

The Local Youth Council (Law on Youth 2019, Article 18) is composed of representatives of the municipal authority responsible for youth policy and non-governmental organisations implementing youth policy. At least one member of the council referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article is a representative of non-governmental organisations implementing the youth policy. A representative of non-governmental organisations implementing the youth policy is a person who has a sponsor of a number of organisations in the organisation of a public call. The number, composition, method of election and work of councils of the next issues of importance for its work are regulated by the Act on the Establishment of a Local Youth Council.

- **Role and responsibilities**

In order to encourage and improve the development of youth policy, strengthening of co-operation and the improvement of the position of youth at the local level, the local youth council can be formed in the municipality as an expert advisory body (the Law on Youth 2019, Article 18).

- **Funding**

The Act on Establishment of the Local Council on Youth shall more closely define the composition, number of members, financing, modus operandi and decision making, as well as other issues of importance for the work of the Council on Youth (the Law on Youth 2019, Article 18).

5.3.3. HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT UNION(S)

Please indicate if there is a body representing the interests of tertiary education students in your country. Yes.

The Law on Higher Education²¹ defines the rights and obligations of students and the work of the student parliament and student organisations. The law states that student members are participating in the work of the university senate (expert body).

- **Student parliaments**²² represent student bodies representing and defending attitudes and interests of students of a particular faculty. The student parliament aims to involve young people as much as possible in the decision making and decision-making process through the formal education system. The president and other members of the student parliament are elected by all students of a given faculty. The student parliament represents the faculty (and its university) at the national and international level. It also takes care of maintaining a high-quality student standard by obtaining various types of student benefits (student cards, student loans, etc.), as well as influencing the faculty policy itself in terms of approving corrective deadlines, creating better relationships with professors, organising public meetings and debates, organising trips and excursions, informing students about the possibilities of obtaining scholarships for studying abroad, etc.

The Student Parliament of the University of Montenegro (state university)

The statute²³ regulates the organisation and activity of the Student Parliament of the University of Montenegro (hereinafter: the Student Parliament), the authority and the manner of deciding its bodies, the method of selecting student representatives in the organs of the university, or the organs of its organisational units, the organisation and work of student councils as well as other issues of importance for the work of the Student Parliament of the University of Montenegro (Article 1).

²¹ The Law on Higher Education (Official Gazette, No. 60/03 (Zakon o visokom obrazovanju, Službeni list broj 60/03).

²² Source: www.spucg.ac.me, last accessed 21 June 2019.

²³ Univerzitet Crne Gore (2014), Statut Studentskog Parlamenta Univerziteta Crne Gore, available at www.spucg.ucg.ac.me/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Statut-Studentskog-parlamenta-UCG-jun-2014.pdf.

The **activities** of the student parliament are (Article 2): realisation and protection of the rights and interests of students; launching initiatives for the adoption or amendment of regulations of interest for students; launching an initiative to consider issues of interest to students at sessions of the council and the steering committee; consideration of issues and implementation of programmes in the field of higher education, science, culture and other areas of relevance to students; consideration of issues and implementation of programmes of importance for the socio-economic situation of students; co-operation with institutions and organisations of importance for the position of students; performing other activities in accordance with the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of the University of Montenegro.

The **founder** of the student parliament is the University of Montenegro (Article 3). The elections for the members of the student parliament shall be carried out every two years, during the winter semester. Elections are announced by the president of the student parliament in October. The elections are conducted and controlled by the University Electoral Commission formed by the Senate of the University of Montenegro, on the proposal of the student parliament (Article 10).

Structure of the student parliament (Article 13): president; executive board; student commissioner at the university; student councils; and student ombudsman of the University of Montenegro. The student parliament's managing authority is the Assembly of the Student Parliament (hereinafter: the assembly) (Article 14). The student parliament consists of student representatives from all units of the university. The number of members of the assembly is defined by special rules. The student parliament of the University of Montenegro performs its activities in the units of the university through student councils and student commissioners at the university units (Article 47).

The Student Parliament of the University of Montenegro is **financed** from funds received from (Article 69): the University of Montenegro, the competent ministry, state institutions, domestic and foreign donors, own activities, jobs and projects. The annual financial plan of the Student Parliament of the University of Montenegro shall be adopted by the assembly by a two-thirds majority of the total number of members, on the proposal of the executive board, with a mandatory financial report every four months (Article 65). Control of the distribution of funds is carried out by the assembly on the basis of reports submitted every four months. The final account for the past year is adopted by the parliament of the Student Parliament of the University of Montenegro (Article 66). The decisions on financing are made by the assembly of the Student Parliament of the University of Montenegro, in accordance with the adopted financial plan. The executive board performs the distribution of funds in accordance with the adopted financial plan (Article 67).

The Student Parliament of the University "Mediteran" (private university)

The **statute**²⁴ (Article 1) shall regulate the organisation and activity of the Student Parliament of the University "Mediteran" (hereinafter: the student parliament), the powers and the manner of

²⁴ Univerzitet Mediteran (2008), Statut studentskog parlamenta univerziteta "Mediteran", available at <http://fit.unimediteran.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Parlament.pdf>.

deciding its bodies, the manner of election of student representatives into the bodies of the University “Mediteran” (hereinafter: the university) bodies of its organisational units, organisation and work of student councils, as well as other issues of importance for the work of the student parliament.

The **activities** of the student parliament are (Article 2): realisation and protection of rights and interests of students; initiating initiatives for passing or changing regulations of interest for students; launching an initiative to consider issues of interest to students at sessions of the senate and the steering committee; discussing issues and implementing programmes in the field of higher education, science, culture and other areas of importance for students; discussing issues and implementing programmes of importance for the socio-economic situation of students; co-operation with institutions and organisations of importance for the position of students; performing other activities in accordance with the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of the University.

The **founder** of the student parliament is the university. The student parliament was established as an internal organisational unit of the university in 2007 (Article 3). The activities of the student parliament are based on the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination based on race, gender, religion, political or other belief (Article 8). All students of the university have the right to nominate candidates for the student parliament and vote in the elections. Students have the right to apply for candidacy after the second year of study (Article 9). Elections for members of the student parliament are held every year during the winter semester. Elections are announced by the president of the parliament in September. The elections are conducted and controlled by the University Electoral Commission formed by the university, on the proposal of the parliament (Article 10).

The **structure** of the student parliament (Article 13): The bodies of the student parliament are: president; executive board; student commissioner at the university.

Financial assets and control (Article 64) The student parliament is financed from the funds received from the university, the founder of the university, domestic and foreign donors, own activities, jobs and projects. The annual financial plan of the student parliament is passed by the student parliament by a two-thirds majority of the total number of members, on the proposal of the executive board (Article 60). The decisions on funding are made by the student parliament, in accordance with the adopted financial salary. The executive board carries out the distribution of financial assets in accordance with the adopted financial plan (Article 62).

5.3.4. SCHOOL STUDENT UNION(S)

The Montenegrin legislative and strategic framework governing the issue of student/pupils parliaments, as bodies through which pupils can participate in decision-making processes in their school, extends through the General Law on Education, the Law on Youth, the strategy of civic education and civic education in primary and secondary schools in Montenegro, as well as through the statutes of all secondary schools.

The **General Law on Education**²⁵ defines participation of students/pupils as “free” activities of students which are realised through: “students’ unions, sections, clubs, associations and other forms. Student co-operatives may also be organised by schools”. In Montenegro, there are many active student parliaments in high schools. According to the law (Article 96/9): “Students of a school class form a class unit; pupils of all school departments form a pupil’s parliament; the powers and manner of work of the pupils’ parliament are determined more closely by the school statute”. Furthermore, the rights of students are also regulated in this Act (Article 97): “Representatives of the pupils’ parliament have the right to participate in the work of professional bodies of the school when discussing issues of interest to pupils (student standards, free activities, etc.)”. This law represents the basis of legal regulation of pupils’ parliaments in secondary schools.

- **Students’/pupils’ parliaments**²⁶ represent a pupil performing body within the schools of Montenegro, made up of pupils themselves. The former name for the students’/pupils’ parliament was a “student community”. Their establishment is legally guaranteed, and the school within which the pupils’ parliament operates is obliged to provide freedom of organisation. The pupils’ parliament aims to protect and promote the rights of students, and to encourage youth activism. In addition, the students’ parliament plays a very important role in maintaining a good-quality student–teacher relationship, but also in establishing co-operation between the school and all other institutions and organisations dealing with youth. In Montenegro, pupils’ parliaments exist in secondary schools, but they do not function in each school equally well. In some schools, they exist only formally, while in others, they have many activities that deserve all praise (work on school newspapers, celebrating important dates for young people, organising excursions, school performances and events, etc.).
- **Union of high school students of Montenegro:**²⁷ The UNSCG is a non-governmental and non-profit youth association, which represents the umbrella organisation of high-school parliaments established in March 2015. The UNSCG consists of the Assembly (composed of over 100 delegates), the steering committee, general secretariat, and the advisory board. Goals of the UNSCG are: to promote the participation of secondary school students in decision-making processes relating to all aspects of their life, with an emphasis on the education system; and to promote contemporary trends in education, youth activism and commerce in these areas through education based on international co-operation; self-sustainability. The vision of the UNSCG is a society in which the young pillar of development and every high-school student has the opportunity to realise their potential and aspirations. The mission of the UNSCG is to enable and create a unique, secure and confidential umbrella community of all pupils’ parliaments in

²⁵ General Law on Education of Montenegro (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro No. 64/2002, 31/2005, 49/2007 and Official Gazette No. 4/2008 - law, 21/2009 - law, 45/2010, 40/2011 - law, 45/2011, 36/2013 - decision US, 39/2013, 44/2013 - correct. and 47/2017); Zakon o opštem obrazovanju (“Sl. list RCG”, br. 64/2002, 31/2005 i 49/2007 i “Sl. list CG”, br. 4/2008 - dr. zakon, 21/2009 - dr. zakon, 45/2010, 40/2011 - dr. zakon, 45/2011, 36/2013 - odluka US, 39/2013, 44/2013 - ispr. i 47/2017).

²⁶ Source: “Aktivna zajednica učenika”, Ministarstvo prosvjete i nauke Crne Gore u saradnji sa FOSI Crna Gora (2007:15), Cetinje.

²⁷ Source: https://unscg.me/?fbclid=IwAR1zu0Ud8v4Q6c29mjnwaR9-XmcXpxQ1RjxzHpLsInHujggkgSK6z2lF_J4, last accessed 18 July 2019.

Montenegro with the purpose of promoting the importance of the participation of secondary school students in decision-making processes relating to all aspects of their education; strengthening the democratic potential of young people, engaging in contemporary trends of youth activism, all through various forms of education, and international co-operation.

The UNSCG, with the financial support of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, co-ordinates the work of the **youth centre** in Podgorica.²⁸ The youth centre was opened in February 2017 by the Ministry of Sport (Directorate for Youth) in co-operation with the capital city (Podgorica) and with the support of the United Nations System in Montenegro. The youth centre is a cultural and educational space intended exclusively for young people aged 15-30 with the aim of encouraging them to take an active part in the life of the community and enable them to spend their free time in a quality way. The UNICEF Youth Innovation Laboratory is located in the youth centre. The youth centre has previously hosted the Regional Office for Youth Co-operation (RYCO) local branch office for Montenegro.

Other bodies

- **Association of non-governmental organisations and associations that implement youth policy:** The Law on Youth (2019) defines rules for their establishment, stating that “non-governmental organisations that implement youth policy can form an alliance of these non-governmental organisations, in accordance with the Law on establishment of NGOs” (Article 20). A representative association, for the purposes of this law, is an alliance comprising several non-governmental organisations implementing youth policies (at least 30 from at least six municipalities). The ministry defines the representativeness of the federation of non-governmental organisations for a period of one year by issuing a certificate of representativeness.
- **Youth organisations of political parties:** represent the youth of a political movement or party. Their main task is to engage young people who represent the basic principles of the party to their generation and bring together young people within their political party. Youth branches of political parties usually deal with young people’s issues, especially family and education issues, student policies, social issues, as well as employment issues and youth housing policies.
- **Trade unions:** in Montenegro there are only two youth unions representing a branch (section) of their union (they are not therefore independent bodies). The aim of youth trade unions is to improve the position of young people and increase the representation of young people in trade union commissions and decision-making bodies. They are engaged in improving the position of young people in the labour market and solving the problems that young workers face. The field of trade union activity is the youth employment policy, its compliance with EU legislation, the prevention of mobbing and the like.
- **Other forms of involving young people in the development of society in Montenegro** are: sports organisations, cultural-artistic associations, the Red Cross of Montenegro, religious organisations etc. According to the Law on Youth (2019), there are also different types of youth

²⁸ Source: <http://ocpg.me/omladinski-centar/>, last accessed 18 July 2019.

services (i.e. youth clubs and youth centres) providing space for development of democratic capacities of young people. There is one Youth Centre (in Podgorica) and 11 youth clubs in municipalities across Montenegro at the moment (including Tivat Youth Club; Budva Youth Space; Youth Corner Ulcinj; Cetinje Youth Club; Youth Club - Gymnasium “Slobodan Skerovic” Podgorica; Youth Club - JU Tuzi; Youth Club Vocational High School “Ivan Uskokovic”; Youth Club School of Economics “Mirko Vesovic” Podgorica; Youth space within the Office of Youth - Berane; Mojkovac Youth Club; and Pljevlja Youth Club).

5.4 YOUNG PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING

Participation of young people in decision-making at the national level has been low, although there are certain improvements. As previously mentioned, there is no national youth council in Montenegro and there are only a few local youth councils. It is important to stress that, besides young people, it is the obligation of the state to form and support work of official structures for ensuring participation, and direct link with stakeholders that are the most important for the area of social, political and economic participation.

Young people and NGOs were, however, actively involved in the development and implementation of youth policy and legal framework, especially in consultations during the development of the new strategic framework in the youth field and revision of the draft Law on Youth.²⁹ The key priorities/outcomes for youth, as stated in the Youth Strategy 2017-2021, are the result of a comprehensive participatory process through which this document was created and in development of which not only the stakeholders and interested parties took part, but first and foremost young people throughout Montenegro.

Although the survey on attitudes, behaviours and knowledge in relation to participation and employment of young people in Montenegro (UN KAP Survey) showed that only 7% of young people (15-30 years old) attended the public hearings, there are recent examples of improvement. The public hearing around revision of the legislative framework in the youth field involved a great deal of diverse actors (including youth and NGOs). An example of taking into account the views of young people and NGOs on the draft Law on Youth is reflected in the fact that the ministry accepted 2/3 of the comments received and substantially amended the Law on Youth in comparison to the draft. The new Law on Youth was adopted by the government in April 2019.

Still, there is a need for improvement in terms of the need to develop other ways of informing, motivating, educating and including young people in order to ensure their participation.

Note: For detailed information on mechanisms and actors of young people’s participation in policy making, please see sections 5.2. and 5.3.

5.5 NATIONAL STRATEGY TO INCREASE YOUTH PARTICIPATION

²⁹ Draft Law on Youth, Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 42/2016 from 7 November 2016 (Predlog Zakona o mladima, “Službeni list Crne Gore, broj 42/2016” od 7 Novembra 2016. godine). <http://zakoni.skupstina.me/zakoni/web/dokumenta/zakoni-i-drugi-akti/630/1922-11569-26-1-19-1.pdf>.

Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation: There is no specific national strategy on youth participation in Montenegro, as an overarching public document, an action plan, or a set of official documents integrating the major directions to be followed in the organisation of policy making at the national level.

The type of official document in the national system (e.g. parliament's bill, government's decree, framework law, etc.): N/A

The time of introduction and timeframe: N/A

Scope and contents:

- **The level of participation (national/regional/local) the strategy aims to address:** N/A
- **A brief summary of the main elements of the strategy:** N/A
- **Key objectives set by the strategy:** N/A
- **Specific target groups within the youth population identified by the strategy, whose participation should be particularly fostered** (e.g. young people with a migrant background): N/A

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy:

- **The government authority** (e.g. a ministry, a national youth agency, the government as a whole, etc.) **responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the strategy:** N/A
- **Whether any evidence-based monitoring/assessment/evaluation of the implementation of the strategy has been conducted and, if applicable, its main results.** N/A

Revisions/updates: N/A

5.6 SUPPORTING YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

5.6.1.LEGAL/POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUNCTIONING AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

- **The Law on Non-governmental Organisations**³⁰ deals with the right of association, with special emphasis on the rights of young people aged over 14 years to establish an NGO, with the consent of their legal guardian. This creates additional legal presumptions for active involvement of young people in social life, enabling high-school students to formalise their emerging participation initiatives. The **Strategy of Government Co-operation with NGOs** (Action Plan 2009-2011) addresses the issue of participation through some of its general

³⁰ The Law on Non-governmental organisations (Official Gazette No. 39/11 of 4 August 2011, 037/17 of 14 June 2017); Zakon o nevladinim organizacijama ('Službeni list Crne Gore', br. 039/11 od 04.08.2011, 037/17 od 14.06.2017).

objectives, such as improvement of the normative-legal framework for the establishment and operation of NGOs; and improving the institutional framework for co-operation with NGOs.

- **The Volunteer Work Law**³¹ regulates the object of this legislation, the concept of volunteering, rights and duties of volunteers, volunteer organisers and users of voluntary services, the ban on discrimination against volunteers and beneficiaries of volunteer work, length of volunteer work, activities that are not considered as voluntary work, conditions for the conclusion and termination of contract on voluntary work; effect of the agreement for voluntary work on the basis of unemployment status for international volunteers, volunteer insurance, establishment of volunteer services, supervision over the implementation of this law and other issues of importance to the development of volunteerism. The law is harmonised with European legislation and international conventions. As regards voluntary work, two regulations have been adopted: Regulation on the form of volunteer booklet (“Official Gazette of Montenegro” No. 33/11) and Rulebook on the procedure for keeping records of contracts of volunteer work (“Official Gazette of Montenegro” No. 33/11).

The civil sector in the area of working with youth³² is much broader than what can be seen from the official data and reports, because the practice of reporting in Montenegro, and the legislation itself, do not recognise the broadness of the civil sector, instead mentioning only non-governmental organisations in this area and leaving out all the other actors of civil society that are founded by or are working with young people. The information on the ratio of youth CSO to the total number of CSOs is not available due to the system of registration of non-governmental organisations in Montenegro.³³

5.6.2. PUBLIC FINANCIAL SUPPORT

In the first youth policy cycle (NYAP 2009-2011), the Directorate for Youth and Sports (now the Ministry of Sports and Youth) has financially supported youth organisations through annual open calls for projects, and thus financed more than 70 projects with €280 000. From 2012, due to the new Law on NGOs, this mechanism was cut, since governmental institutions are forbidden to launch an open call for funding projects from their respective fields of action. According to the new Law on NGOs, there is only one centralised fund for NGO projects. The DYS has furthermore implemented most of its activities in partnership with NGOs and is recognised as an open, transparent, proactive, partnership-oriented body.

The Ministry of Sports and Youth and the Directorate for Youth in Montenegro during 2017/2018 issued an annual open call to award funding for youth organisations for financing and co-financing

³¹ The Volunteer Work Law (Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 26/10 and 14/12); Zakon o volonterskom Radu (‘Službeni list Crne Gore’, broj 26/10 i 14/12).

³² Source: Youth Strategy 2017-2021, Civil Sector in the Area of Youth (2016: 20).

³³ Youth Bank Hubs in Western Balkans and Turkey: Political, Social and Economic Participation of Youth in Montenegro, Baseline study, National Report – Montenegro (2018: 18), available at: [Baseline-study-PRIMA.pdf](#).

youth projects, in accordance with Article 30 of the Law on Youth (2016),³⁴ and Articles 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9 of the Rulebook on the Manner, Procedure and Criteria for Assigning Funds to Youth Organisations and Control over the Implementation of Programmes and Projects (Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 23/2017).³⁵ Through this open call, the Ministry of Sports and Youth financed projects focusing on promotion, development and improvement of youth policy at the national and local level; entrepreneurship, development of youth work, youth information, non-formal education of young people and for participation of young people in decision making.

The Revised Law on Youth (2019) has changed the funding schemes, while in 2019 €100 000 has been allocated (in total) to support youth NGOs.

In 2017, the Directorate for Youth supported 36 projects (€170 000 in total) and for 2018 the budget is much higher than in 2016. In 2018, there were several open calls for projects of the Ministry of Sports and Youth relevant for youth participation. The total number of youth projects supported in 2018 was 86 according to the Law on Youth 2016 (€400 000) and 10 according to the Law on NGOs (€111 000). For example:

- **“Get together for the young”**³⁶

Pursuant to Article 32v of the Law on Non-Governmental Organisations (Official Gazette of Montenegro Nos. 39/11 and 37/17), in connection with the Decision on Determining Priority Areas of Public Interest and the Amount of Funds for Financing Projects and Programmes of Non-Governmental Organisations in 2018 (Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 83/17) and the Rulebook on Contents of the Public Competition for the Allocation of Funds for Financing Projects and Programmes of Non-Governmental Organisations and the Appearance and Contents of Application to Public Competition (Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 14/18), the Commission for the allocation of funds for financing projects/programmes of non-governmental organisations of the Ministry of Sports and Youth announced the public competition “Get together for youth” for financing projects/programmes of non-governmental organisations in the areas of **social care for young people and civil society development and volunteerism**. NGOs which have the capacity for and experience in implementing projects for young people are invited to apply with projects/programmes that can contribute to the realisation of objectives and goals established by the Law on Youth and the Youth Strategy 2017-2021 in the areas of social care for young people and the development of civil society and volunteerism.

5.6.3. INITIATIVES TO INCREASE THE DIVERSITY OF PARTICIPANTS

To promote the participation of more and a greater diversity of young people in representative democracy, in youth organisations and other civil society organisations, measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force (and onwards) through financing youth

³⁴ The Law on Youth (Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 42/2016); Zakon o mladima (‘Službeni list Crne Gore’, br. 42/2016).

³⁵ Source: www.ms.gov.me/ministarstvo/Konkurs_za_dodjelu_sredstava_omladinskim_organizac/, last accessed 16 July 2019.

³⁶ Source: www.ms.gov.me/ministarstvo/direktorat_za_mlade/184754/Javni-konkurs.html, last accessed 16 July 2019.

organisation projects. The Directorate for Youth maintains strong criteria when it comes to target groups' diversity as well as youth participation in the project.

- **“Active for active youth”**³⁷

In 2018, an Open Call for Projects of the Ministry of Sports and Youth³⁸ focused on the area of **social care and participation** of young people. Pursuant to Article 32 of the Law on Non-Governmental Organisations (Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 39/11 and 37/17), Article 2 and 3 of the Decision on Determining Priority Areas of Public Interest and the Amount of Funds for Financing Projects and Programmes of Non-Governmental Organisations in 2019 (Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 080/18) and the Rulebook on Contents of the Public Competition for the Allocation of Funds for Financing Projects and the programmes of non-governmental organisations and the appearance and content of the application for a public competition (Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 14/18), the Commission for the allocation of funds for financing projects/programmes of non-governmental organisations in the field of social care of youth, the Ministry of Sports and Youth and Youth announces the Public Competition “Active for Active Youth” to fund projects/programmes of non-governmental organisations in the field of social care for young people. **Priority problems** in the field of social care for young people whose resolution is planned by financing projects/programmes of non-governmental organisations are focused on the shortfall: engagement of young people in all areas of interest for young people, especially young people at risk of discriminatory behaviour; activities and involvement of young people in decision-making processes, policy making and their implementation; informing young people about the possibilities of acquiring additional knowledge and skills, especially in the field of youth entrepreneurship; young people's confidence in existing mechanisms that enable them to participate more actively in the decision-making process.

5.7 “LEARNING TO PARTICIPATE” THROUGH FORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

The Ministry of education in Montenegro took several measures aiming to support various forms of “learning to participate” from an early age through formal education and non-formal learning. **Strategy for Civic education in Primary and Secondary Schools in Montenegro 2007-2010**,³⁹ introduces the school subjects (such as: Civic education and Media Literacy) in the formal education system in Montenegro, that cover the topic of participation to a high degree, and stipulates additional measures such as teachers training.

Various projects of NGOs, which enhance learning to participate among students at all educational levels, have been funded by various governmental funds for NGOs. For example, the Directorate

³⁷ Source: www.ms.gov.me/ministarstvo/saradnja_sa_nvo/196784/Javni-konkurs-Aktivno-za-aktivne-mlade.html, last accessed 22 July 2019.

³⁸ Note: The latest open call of the ministry was published on 1 March 2019 (total amount €100 000).

³⁹ Strategy for Civic education in Primary and Secondary Schools in Montenegro 2007-2010 (Strategija građanskog obrazovanja u osnovnim i srednjim školama u Crnoj Gori 2007-2010), available at https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/montenegro_strategy_civic_education_2007_2010.pdf.

for Youth and Sports (now Ministry of Sports and Youth) has financed participation projects for university and high-school students, while one of the main criteria for all projects financially supported was youth participation. Moreover, DYS has implemented a number of trainings, conferences and round tables for organised youth on the topic of youth participation. Yet, when it comes to development of quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning and provision of educators' support (the possibilities offered to teachers, trainers, non-formal education workers and youth workers for continuous training and certification related to the development of social and civic competences) much more needs to be done in the future.

Since 2014 the DYS has also started opening youth clubs and youth centres. A youth club/centre is a place where NGOs practise youth work-related activities and the place where young people can improve their social skills, non-formal education, leisure time, culture and get information about various topics. As previously mentioned, there are 11 youth clubs and one youth centre currently functioning in Montenegro.

Within the open calls of 2017, 2018, 2019 the Ministry of Sports and Youth has financed a great number of projects which were linked to youth participation through non-formal learning.

Both the Law on Youth and the Youth Strategy define youth work, namely: "Youth work represents the activities that are organised with youth and for youth, and are based on non-formal education, in accordance with their needs and possibilities." Even though the definition of youth worker is not given in the law, its explanation is covered by the National Youth Strategy.

However, youth work is not a recognised profession in Montenegro, that is, there is no occupational standard.

The NGO Forum MNE in co-operation with the Centre for Vocational Education (Ministry of Education) has completed the process of recognition of the vocation of youth activist (on a European level equal to youth leader) which will significantly contribute to the professionalisation of youth work and enhance youth services at both national and local level. Additionally, it will provide an opportunity for young people who have no university education to be engaged in youth work in a responsible and professional manner. The vocation of youth activist was accredited by the Ministry of Education in March 2017, while a programme for the first generation of youth activists (15 participants) started in September 2017 and is financed by the Ministry of Sports and Youth. In 2018 the ministry also financed the programme for the second generation of youth activists (15 participants). The programme consists of three trainings and three months of practice together with three exams, after which all the participants shall gain the youth activist occupation certificate. Standards of the youth activist occupation have also been adopted.

- **Democracy Workshops "Barbara Prammer"**⁴⁰

One example of unique and sustainable educational practice is **this educational programme** implemented by the Parliament of Montenegro with the goal of encouraging interest among

⁴⁰ Source: www.skupstina.me/index.php/en/citizens/demokratske-radionice, last accessed 15 July 2019.

children and the young in politics and democratic processes. The programme was launched in October 2012, with the help of the Parliament of Austria, financial support of the ERSTE Foundation and professional and technical implementation by the NGO Forum MNE (Forum Youth and Informal Education). In June 2014, the parliament took over the implementation of the programme using its own capacities. Apart from the Parliament of Austria, the Parliament of Montenegro is the only parliament which implements this or a similar kind of programme for children and the young. To date, the programme has gathered more than 21 000 participants.

The programme is envisaged as a programme of informal civic education for students of primary schools. The workshops are implemented on three subjects: “Democracy and Parliament”, “European Union” and “Human Rights”, within which they learn about parliamentary democracy, adoption and implementation of laws, active citizens, values and history of the European Union, and universal principles translated into the human rights and the rights of the child. Through various interactive activities and in a manner adapted to their age, and with the help of selected and specially trained teachers/trainers, the children and the young aged from 8 to 15 are discovering how democracy functions using creative methods, which imply practical and experiential learning. Within the workshops on the subject “Democracy and Parliament”, workshop participants have the opportunity to visit the building of the parliament and find out on the spot how laws are adopted, and often to watch the sittings live from the citizens’ box. Within the programme, students have the opportunity to meet and converse with the members of the Parliament of Montenegro and other foreign and domestic officials, and to get answers from them regarding the subject of the workshop they are attending, as well as regarding the duties they are performing. The students transfer the acquired knowledge and experiences into newspapers, video or radio features, which they can watch or listen to at the very end of the workshop, and which are later published on the children’s parliamentary website (www.demokraskeradionice.me). At the end of every cycle of workshops, in a ceremonial event, the participants (the representatives of the schools that participated in that cycle) are presented with certificates.

5.8 RAISING POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

The Ministry of Sport and Youth supported 26 projects in the 2018 contests according to the key outcome C “Young people are active citizens, involved, motivated, proactive and participate in decision making, community development, policy making and implementation”, among which were several projects concerning youth participation in decision-making processes.

The Ministry of Sports and Youth included young people in the drafting of the Law on Youth, Youth Strategy 2017-2021 (in the work of working groups for drafting these documents, through public discussions, research ...).

The Law on Youth recognises Active participation of young people as one of the principles of youth policy (Article 11).

5.9 E-PARTICIPATION

Online tools for information and participation in decision making of ministries and parliament and ministries: The government has established a mechanism for online participation called ‘e-petition’⁴¹ that allows citizens to create internet petition, which, if supported by 6 000 citizens, can be submitted to the government for consideration in the form of initiative. The government has also launched a portal (www.euprava.me) with a plan to facilitate and speed up communication with the citizens, through the system of electronic document management. The Government of Montenegro and the Parliament of Montenegro have their own websites and e-mails. Also, these authorities use online contact forms and accounts on social networks to communicate with citizens and young people. All ministries have their own websites and e-mail accounts which citizens, and thus young people, can use to acquire information about the work of these organs or come to the necessary information. Of social networks, Facebook is the most popular, followed by Twitter.

Online tools for information and participation in decision making of municipalities: At the local level, all local government units (except at the moment the Municipality of Gusinje) have their own websites and e-mail. The form for the questions of citizens available on the website has a slightly smaller number of municipalities, while other channels are rare. The exceptions are certain municipal secretariats and for example offices for youth, which have their e-mails, Twitter accounts and even official Facebook pages.⁴²

To make effective use of information and communication technologies to broaden and deepen participation of young people preliminary measures and initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force, e.g. in the framework of the Youth Social Revitalisation project (2009-2011), in partnership with IOM, several activities have been undertaken, and three websites/internet platforms have been created. Ever since, DYS supported a variety of **youth information** projects and youth information workers trainings, as well as national activities in the framework of European campaign on the youth right to information e.g. “Information Right Now!”

- **U-Report Western Balkans**⁴³

The UNICEF Global initiative was launched in May 2018 representing the world’s first sub-regional U-Report which includes the UNICEF Country Offices of Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro. The goal of the Western Balkans U-Report is to serve as a platform that facilitates the flow of information and analysis at national and sub-regional levels, providing many quantifiable and reliable metrics for evaluating and steering national and regional policy development and integration, and for gauging progress on SDGs and on other global indicators such as gender equality, human rights, inclusion of youth in decision-making processes and others. The Western Balkans U-Report will be led by national steering committees of each respective country office, where each will design and conduct national polls in their respective countries, while a sub-regional

⁴¹ More information available at: www.epeticije.gov.me

⁴² Youth Bank Hubs in Western Balkans and Turkey: Political, Social and Economic Participation of Youth in Montenegro, Baseline study, National Report – Montenegro (2018: 15), available at [Baseline-study-PRIMA.pdf](#).

⁴³ Source: <https://westernbalkans.ureport.in/story/187/>, last accessed 15 July 2019.

steering committee will structure question flows for conducting sub-regional polls, in topics and areas that are relevant and important to the sub-region, as defined by the sub-regional steering committee. Western Balkans U-Report poll results can be viewed for each country separately or for the entire Western Balkans sub-region. The Western Balkans U-Report will enable quick and easy comparative analysis between Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro to determine the challenges and issues faced by their respective residents, and to examine opportunities for institutional as well as inter-agency co-operation at both the national and sub-regional levels, in addressing the challenges, issues and situations uncovered by U-Reporters.

5.10 CURRENT DEBATES AND REFORMS

Forthcoming policy developments

Pathways of the future policy developments in the area of youth participation are summarised in the Youth Strategy 2017-2021 (2016: 40), which emphasises two types of problem that need to be addressed: 1. Lack of information and confidence of young people/citizens in the existing mechanisms, such as structures for participation within educational establishments, as well as public debates and other legally defined mechanisms of citizen participation; 2. Maladjustment of existing mechanisms to young people's needs and/or the lack of new mechanisms that would adequately ensure the fulfilment of the rights of young people to participate in decision-making processes. The problem is also that not enough attention is being paid to the development of personalities, self-confidence and accountability of young people, so that their capacities can be developed and applied in the best possible manner. Also, there is a problem with lack of support for their activism and lack of support for development of that activism, no matter what shape or form it might take. Although, improvement are generally needed in the area of youth policy implementation, there are various measures undertaken by the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and its Directorate for Youth, towards providing additional support to the relevant stakeholders to develop their capacities, in accordance with the Law on Youth. Furthermore, in co-operation with the Directorate for Youth of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the OSCE Mission to Montenegro⁴⁴ puts particular emphasis on youth protection, and on promoting youth participation in areas like preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalisation which lead to terrorism, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, education, tolerance and non-discrimination and political participation.

Ongoing debates

- **The European Commission progress report for Montenegro (EC 2019: 6)** states that the level of trust in the electoral framework and conduct of elections remains low. Important priority recommendations from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe remain unaddressed. The electoral legal framework needs to be reviewed in a comprehensive and inclusive manner to regulate all key aspects of the process. In October 2018, Parliament established a temporary committee on further

⁴⁴ Source: www.osce.org/youth, last accessed 18 June 2019.

reform of electoral and other legislation. The committee, which was partly boycotted by the opposition, has yet to deliver *inter alia* on a comprehensive electoral reform well in advance of the next parliamentary elections. Limited progress was made in 2018 on re-establishing the political dialogue in Parliament with the partial and temporary return of a majority of opposition members of parliament and the establishment of a temporary parliamentary committee on further reform of electoral and other legislation. Active and constructive participation by all parties is required to enhance parliamentary accountability, the oversight of the executive and democratic scrutiny, and achieve better quality legislation (EC 2019: 7).

- The ministry has organised several regional conferences focusing on youth issues. A recent press conference entitled “What Politics and Society Can Do for Youth in Montenegro”⁴⁵ was held in light of the **Youth Studies in the Southeast European Countries 2018/2019 – Montenegro**.⁴⁶ Several key topics have been discussed, including democratisation, activation and attention that the government and society address the youth population. It has been stressed that young Montenegrins are committed to democracy and European values, but corruption and nepotism continue to dominate Montenegrin society, and for this reason young people are generally willing to adapt to such a system, which has been perceived as alarming. Young people are also not sufficiently active politically and socially and need to engage more. The study points out that young people in Montenegro feel that they are not an important target group for politicians and feel that little attention is paid to their demands. Recent developments, however (such as previously mentioned increasing the number of young MPs), prove otherwise. A representative of the Union of High School and Youth Centre pointed out that trust is crucial for young people because they do not have it when it comes to the whole society in general, and this is mainly thought of in political parties and NGOs. The reason for this is their feeling that their opinion will not be respected, according to the study. It was also mentioned that politicians and society should support young people regardless of their age.
- **The Volunteer Work Law**⁴⁷ caused a debate between NGOs and the government in certain aspects which propose clear and strict procedures relating to volunteer contracts. The NGO sector finds these regulations too strict and inflexible, while the intention of the government was to minimise potential abuses of volunteer work. During the harmonisation process of MNE laws with the EU acquis, several recommendations relating to volunteering were adopted as important to harmonise with MNE laws in this area. The Development Strategy of Voluntary Work was adopted in 2010, where special emphasis is put on voluntary work and protecting the rights of volunteers. The reasons for initiating the strategic document are associated with the assessment

⁴⁵ Source: <https://mladiinfo.me/odrzana-konferencija-sta-politika-i-drustvo-mogu-da-urade-za-mlade-u-crnoj-gori/>, last accessed 18 June 2019.

⁴⁶ The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), “FES Youth Studies Southeast Europe 2018/2019” , Youth Study Montenegro 2018/2019, by Petar Đukanović, available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/15267.pdf>. The international research project was simultaneously conducted in 10 countries of Southeast Europe. More than 10 000 young people between 14 and 29 years of age participated in the research. In the case of Montenegro, the research was done on a national sample of 711 respondents aged 14 to 29 from 15 Montenegrin cities.

⁴⁷ The Volunteer Work Law (Official Gazette of Montenegro Nos. 26/10 and 14/12); Zakon o volonterskom Radu (‘Službeni list Crne Gore’, broj 26/10 i 14/12).

that the voluntary work is a significant resource. Contrary to its purpose, instead of contributing to the development of the culture of volunteerism in Montenegro, to a large extent represents an obstacle for its further development, treating volunteering as a specific form of labour-legal relationship, rather than a voluntary and private initiative of citizens. The law prohibits volunteering by children under 15 years of age, even in cases when activities are organised by educational institutions or are in the function of education of those children. In that way, the law is preventing the development of the culture of volunteerism exactly in that age group that would be a natural target group for the development of the culture of volunteerism. It should be noted that these provisions of the law are in conflict with the practice of the Bureau for Education Services, which has optional and compulsory curricular materials for elementary and high-school education, titled “Volunteer and humanitarian work”, which includes practical volunteering.