

# **YOUTH MOBILITY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS THE PRESENT CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO, KOSOVO\*, SERBIA, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

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**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND PRACTICE**



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Balkan regional platform for  
youth participation and dialogue

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**THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**  
**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND PRACTICE**

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## INTRODUCTION

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Mobility is an opportunity for an individual, group or social strata to move and make choices in terms of residence, a career or availability of resources. For example, academic mobility involves movement of students and lecturers from one institution to another, often beyond the borders of their own country, in order to gain necessary professional training or practical skills.

The main purpose of this research is to contribute to increasing the focus of the public authorities in the Western Balkans to provide more favourable conditions for enhanced mobility of young people with the EU and within the region itself. More specifically, the research study encompasses a number of national policy measures that have been adopted in respective countries in support to facilitated regional youth mobility in education, training and employment.

The comparative study has been prepared to serve as indicator of differences/discrepancies between the existing legislative/institutional framework and the overall status and needs of young people (aged 15-30), youth groups in the communities so as to provide guidelines for their more profound understanding of the concept and encourage their proactive advocacy approaches in order to increase mobility of young people in the region.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Entire research was designed and conducted in a way to provide statistically reliable and relevant data, while the assignment included an extensive desk and field research work, comparative analysis based on both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Qualitative methods included content analysis, and comparative analysis of national youth policy framework with the focus on youth mobility in five targeted countries in the Balkans (Serbia, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). Therefore, research process included regional comparative desk research and field research. It included comparative analysis of youth policy framework, with special focus on youth mobility in five targeted countries, and governmental initiatives in support to facilitated youth mobility in education, training and employment, including analysis of existing frameworks for enhanced mobility of young people with the EU. It also included mapping of existing regional platforms for youth mobility and identifying main tendencies – similarities and differences among respective countries, including main challenges.

Research was conducted by the team composed of two regional experts in close cooperation with the project lead partner (ALDA [www.alda-europe.eu](http://www.alda-europe.eu) ) and its network members - Local

Democracy Agencies in Prijedor, Mostar, Zavidovići (BiH), Nikšić (Montenegro), Peja/Peć (Kosovo\*), Subotica, Knjaževac (Serbia) and ALDA Skopje.

The most important is active role of young people in the research and **1637 young people reached** through offline and online survey and focus groups (1520 respondents to survey and 117 participants in focus groups in the countries included)

Interviews were organized with 17 representatives of relevant regional/country based stakeholders.

Focus group element of the research targeting the youth groups from around fifty municipalities (non-capital cities, smaller urban and rural communities across the region) and focused on the population of vulnerable youth groups: young people from rural areas; marginalized youth, the unemployed, young people with low education, young people who are not involved in non-formal education, youth with low economic status.



## 1. REGIONAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Regional comparative analysis included study of youth policy and legislative frameworks with special focus on youth mobility in five targeted Balkan countries from the regional, national and local perspective including analysis of existing frameworks towards current European standards.

This process included also mapping of existing regional platforms for youth mobility;

- Identifying main tendencies – similarities and differences among respective countries;
- Identifying policy gaps and main challenges in the implementation especially at the local level in relation to various types of youth mobility;
- and field research - to collect local data that complement regional comparative desk research, as well as to provide support to capacity building of local researchers.

### BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

According to the population census of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2013, there is 773 850 young people, aged from 15 to 30. They consist about 21.91% of the total population.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has complex political and governance structure, consisting of national government institutions, institutions at the entity level, cantonal and local institutions, and respective policy measures in effect at different tiers of government.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina youth work, young people and their participation in society, and mobility are recognised better at the level of the entities, the district, and at local level than at the level of the country itself.

The Council of Ministers has not yet either adopted a framework Law on the Youth of BiH, nor is one in the procedure.

However, some steps have been made. The Council of Ministers of BiH has found the Commission for Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH as its permanent body. It is now in its third mandate. It works with limited financial and human capacities. The Commission is consisted from 18 members, now it consists of 9 members; 4 representatives of government institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs: 2 representatives, Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Federation of BiH: 1 representative, Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports of the Republic of Srpska: 1 representative), while there are 5 representatives of youth NGO sector in BiH.

The Commission proposes and realises:

- The solution for an institutional framework;
- The construction of recommendations for youth policy;

- Initiatives towards government and parliaments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including recommendations for creating new and replacing or adding to already existing legal solutions;
- The organisation of meetings with young people;
- Initiatives regarding international and other institutions in question of importance to youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina

With regards to the mobility of students, Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only country in the Western Balkans which has not joined in full Erasmus+ EU Programme, the Youth component. With this, it has limited access to mobility of young people through this programme, as a Partner Country.

In November 2013 BiH officials have signed the Contract of implementation of CEEPUS III programme in BiH with the aim of connecting scientific-research fields and academic cooperation through creation of the networks of universities. BiH is a member of Central-European programme of exchange until 2017.

Labour and Employment Agency of BiH/Sector for International Cooperation and Local Market, amongst others, has duties of international representation and cooperation with international organisations and discharging of international commitments from the area of labour and employment, as well as collecting information on labour supply and demand at the international market and submitting information to Entities' institutes.

With regards to the mobility of workers the Council of Ministers of BiH has signed Agreements on Employment of Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and respective Protocols on the Implementation of these Agreements with the Republic of Serbia, Republic of Slovenia, Federal Republic of Germany, and the State of Qatar. However, there is no information on how many of exchanged workers were young people.

In 2016, 100 students from BiH had an opportunity to work for 2 months in FR Germany through summer Internship programme of the German Federal Employment Agency, through its International Placement Services.

### **Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>**

The most relevant law regulating all youth issues, including participation and mobility, is the Youth Law of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (in further text FBIH).

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<sup>1</sup>Towards a Youth Policy in FBIH - Survey on the Position and Needs of Youth in the Federation of BiH in 2013: "Youth Participation and Mobility

This law guarantees youth participation in youth representative bodies, primarily youth councils, at local, cantonal, and federal level. Through these bodies youth will be able to participate in decision-making processes, creating youth policies and strategies and other processes that concern them. Another law relevant to youth is the Law on Volunteering of FBiH, which regulates the rights and obligations of volunteers, and defines volunteering as an "activity of interest to the Federation of BiH, which contributes to the improvement of life quality, active involvement of citizens in social processes, and to the development of a more humane and equal democratic society."

Youth participation is connected with youth mobility in that active youth are more likely to participate in different exchange programs. Through mobility, youth gain practical experiences that they can use as examples of good practice in their local community. "Mobility is the concept of youth travel, domestically or abroad, for the purpose of gaining new knowledge, skills, intercultural exchanges, expanding horizons, etc. This concept is important for youth development and in many countries it manifests in the form of special programs with the support of government institutions."

The Youth Law of FBiH and the Law on Volunteering regulate youth participation and mobility. These two laws, as previously noted, are the cornerstone laws on youth issues in FBiH, since they regulate the general position of youth in the Federation of BiH.

The Law on Volunteering was passed to protect volunteers during volunteer work. This law regulates volunteering conditions, the rights and obligations of volunteers and organizers of volunteering, as well as penalties for violating the law. The passing of the Law on Volunteering contributed to the youth work sector in FBiH.

The Law on Youth regulates issues related to the life, position and activities of youth in FBiH. One of the goals of this law is to "strengthen youth participation and inclusion (...) based on the established participation mechanisms." The Law stipulates that all levels of government should, while acting within their competencies, organize public debates and consultations with the participation of youth councils in the process of adopting sector youth policies, youth action programs, youth strategies and budget items that concern youth. Therefore, the law guarantees youth the right to get involved in the decision-making process on issues that concern them.

Youth officers should also contribute to youth participation through informing, motivating youth, etc.

Youth representative bodies in FBiH are called youth councils and can be formed at local and cantonal level, with the Youth Council of FBiH.

Youth councils are equivalent to youth committees in Republika Srpska, and the Youth Council of FBiH is equivalent to the Youth Committee of Republika Srpska.

Youth space is part of a youth policy, and as stipulated in the Youth Law, local governments are responsible for providing youth with space appropriate for their needs. These spaces are managed by youth councils, and can be used by other organisations in the municipality. Youth

space greatly contributes to youth participation at local level through organising different events important to youth.

The Youth Law treats youth mobility as part of the youth sector – “youth mobility and cooperation”. Mobility should be recognised as such in local, cantonal and regional youth strategies.

### **Institutional Framework**

The Youth Law states that one of the 16 ministries in the Government of FBiH is to include “youth” in its title; namely the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports. The law on ministries is currently undergoing amendment, which will change the name of this ministry into the Federal Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and invest it with competencies that will allow it to oversee all the projects conducted by other ministries and related to youth.

Some cantons assign youth issues to their ministries, as is the case with the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Sarajevo Canton. Cantonal ministries in other cantons, which deal with youth issues, are ministries of education, science, or culture and sports. Cantonal ministries in charge of youth issues are encouraged to add “youth” to their title, to emphasize their competencies in the youth sector.

Youth councils at local and cantonal level are the institutional framework for youth, representing the interests of youth organisations and youth. Municipal councils’ youth committees also deal with youth issues and comprise municipal councils and representatives of cantonal youth councils. Youth council representatives participate in expert working groups for creating, updating and monitoring local and cantonal youth strategies.

Pursuant to the Youth Law, and supported by the KULT organisation, the Government of FBiH has started the process of establishing of the youth committee of FBiH, as an inter-ministerial body whose members will be representatives of ministries and youth councils in FBiH. The youth committee will provide recommendations for programmatic action of institutions and ministries in FBiH dealing with youth issues.

Additionally, municipalities can voluntarily establish a Youth Advisory Committee, whose members will comprise youth from youth organisations and non-governmental organisations that deal with youth issues, with the aim of connecting youth and the local government. For instance, the Youth Advisory Committee can make decisions on allocating the local community’s funds for youth projects. Members of the Committee are youth who have experience with the youth sector, most frequently representatives of youth organisations, NGOs that deal with youth issues or institutions pertinent to youth.

Pursuant to the Youth Law of FBiH, local communities shall provide a youth space, financial support for youth councils, youth advisory committees, if such bodies exist, and youth projects. In doing so, local communities encourage youth participation in decision making and active involvement in the communities’ social life.

Pursuant to the Youth Law of FBiH, the Youth Council was founded in December 2015 by 6 cantonal Youth Councils, with 50% of operational funding by the Federation of BiH.

With regards to the Strategy for Youth, the Draft Youth Strategy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been finalised and awaits the adoption.

At cantonal level, at the time of making this study, Unsko-sanski Canton appears to have been the most active in the development of the Youth Strategy; they already have a draft. Furthermore Zeničko-dobojski Canton has started the preparation measures for drafting the youth strategy.

The most of the Cities and Municipalities in the Federation of BiH has developed the local youth strategies according to the Youth Law of FBiH.

## Republic of Srpska

In the Republic of Srpska in charge of the youth issues is the Ministry of family, Youth and Sports, while other stakeholders are involved in its development and implementation. Its Youth Department covers: determination of National Action Plan and Youth Policy of the Republic and taking care of its implementation; creation of the assumptions for solution of youth issues – employment of the young, improvement of their social status, inclusion into society; realisation of youth projects; encouraging an active participation of the young in society; establishment of youth centres; cooperation with youth organisations; international cooperation in the domain of organisation and activity of the youth.

Currently in Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the Republika Srpska level, there is the Law on Youth Organising (“Official Gazette of RS”, No. 98/04, 119/08). As well, the Republika Srpska has already implemented two youth policies in periods of 2006-2010 and 2010-2015. In July 2016 the National Assembly of Republic of Srpska adopted the proposal of the Youth Policy of Republika Srpska for 2016-2020. One of the specific objectives of the youth policy within its strategic objectives (to foster the employment of young people) is directly fostering mobility of young people in Republic of Srpska, namely the operative objective 1.4 is to Foster educational, professional and territorial mobility of young people. The measures foreseen to achieve these operational objectives are: Fostering employment and self-employment in rural and underdeveloped communities; Development and implementation of educational programmes for enhancement of employability of young people; Capacity building and support to the Examination Centre within the Institute for Adult Education.

Another strategic objective of the Youth Policy tackling the mobility of young people is the strategic objective 5 – To improve opportunities for quality leisure time of young people, and more specifically its operational objectives 5.4, widening the scope of opportunities for mobility of young people.

Achievement of this operative objective is seen through: Support of mobility of young people and representatives of youth organisations and organisations for youth at local and international level; Improvement and development of infrastructure and offer for youth tourism in Republic of Srpska; Improvement and development of networks to support youth mobility in Republic of Srpska and Improvement of opportunities for mobility of persons with disabilities.

Mobility is also included in the Law on Youth Organising ("Official Gazette of RS", No. 98/04, 119/08), in the Article 75a as educational, cultural and touristic mobility of young people, as well as their involvement in the international exchanges and exchange. This law also mentions international youth cooperation which includes different types of cooperation among young people on international level, as well as international institutional cooperation in the spheres of interest of young people, even though it does not provide any statistics about how many young people were exchanged or participated in these international programmes/projects. Article 19th of this Law among others, lists mobility of young people as one of the priority areas of intervention for the Ministry and the local self-governments in the field of youth policy. This law also defines the work of the National and local youth councils as the main stakeholders for the implementation of the youth policy and its strategy.

For example, the Fund „Dr Milan Jelić“ exists within the Ministry of Science and Technology, and among other support measures to excellent students, finances studying abroad at foreign universities.

In the Republic of Srpska one of the field that tackles young people and that has been developing over the years is volunteering. This entity has a Law on volunteering which sets the main institutional and promotional mechanisms for volunteering in Republic of Srpska. This law is further supported by the Strategy for Improvement and Development of Volunteering in Republic of Srpska (2014-2018). The Strategy further defines the Strategic directions/intervention fields: 1) the legal framework for volunteering; 2) Volunteering infrastructure; 3) Volunteering in the systems of formal and non-formal education; and 4) Promotion of volunteering.

## Brčko District

Brčko District has not yet adopted the law, its draft being in the procedure at the moment. There has been several initiatives led by KULT in 2009 to create the Law on Youth, but not even these were strong enough to influence the District Government to create the Law.

Although attempts existed and e.g. company "Terra Firma Consulting" from Brčko was engaged to prepare an initial draft of the Strategy for youth of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period from 2013 to 2018<sup>2</sup>.for purposes of the Department for professional and administrative Affairs,

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<sup>2</sup>Strategy for youth of Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period from 2013 to 2018. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jSLgpz>

subdivisions for support local communities, citizens' associations and NGOs of Brčko District Government. This document was created and had provided insight into the current state and possible courses of action for future, and, as such, could have serve as a basis for systematic approach to solving problems important for young people. However, it was never adopted.

## **The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

According to the State Statistical Office of Macedonia, young people (15 to 29) make up 21.27% of the total population. The biggest challenge of young people in FYR Macedonia is related the high unemployment rate, which is (according to the same source) 48.2% among people between the age of 15 and 24.

Currently, there is still no Youth Law implemented. In 2011 the Macedonian government withdrew the proposed Youth Law after the reactions from civil society organisations, because the draft law proposed to create a National Youth Council that would be politically run by a board, in which the absolute majority of members would be selected by state authorities.

In February 2016 the Government has adopted the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, developed by the Youth and Sports Agency in cooperation with UNDP. It was developed through a consultation process with civil sector across FYR Macedonia, and followed by the final debate with about 100 participants. On the other side the National Youth Council does not accept/recognise the Strategy, nor many NGOs.

*The National Youth Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2016–2025*-Pursuant to the Strategy a young person is any person between 15 and 29 years old.

The implementation of the Strategy is designed through 9 key areas: 1. youth participation; 2. youth information; 3. local youth work; 4. education; 5. employment and pre-employment support; 6. culture; 7. sports; 8. health; 9. quality of life.

The Strategy does not recognise mobility of young people as a priority area itself, nor deals with the question of mobility as a tool for advancing the position of young people in FYR Macedonia. The only reference to the mobility in the Strategy can be found in the priority are “Quality of life” where it recognises the need of young people for greater number of mobility and learning programmes.

The adopted Youth Action Plan for 2016 & 2017 also does not give any reference to mobility of young people, nor to its support. However, the Youth Action Plan puts significant attention to the development and recognition of youth work in FYR Macedonia, collaborating with a number of the most active and experienced youth NGOs.

Its implementation is seen through achievement of 3 main objectives:

1. Recognition of the youth work as the key tool for personal and social development of young people

2. Formal recognition of implementation and offer of non-formal education activities as supplementing part of the formal education system in the country;
3. Quality assurance and available offer of youth work opportunities for young people in every municipality;

There are a number of Local youth strategies (2010-2015) developed. They follow the priorities of the National Youth Strategy. Neither of them refers to mobility of young people as a priority/resource/need.

*Institutional framework:*

*The Agency for Youth and Sports* is compensating the absence of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Macedonia. The Agency of Youth and Sports performs the activities referring to the care for psycho-physical upbringing of youth and their protection from addictions, prostitution, crime and other socio-pathological occurrences; taking care of the status of youth; encourages and helping different types of organisation of youth; undertaking activities for creating conditions for keeping skilled and talented young people in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as creating conditions for stimulating their return to the Republic of Macedonia; covering the sports and sporting-recreational activities in the sphere of sports; following the development of professional sport and it performs other activities stipulated by the Law. The Agency of Youth and Sports has a feature of a legal entity.

Within the agency there is a disproportion in split between different sectors, where the Sector for Youth is allocated only 4% of the total budget of the Agency, and the main focus is on Sports.

The Section for Youth is consisted of two departments - Department of youth policy and training and Department for International Cooperation.

The Sector for Youth is implementing different activities, out of which some of the most important are: development of the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025; creating local youth strategies in FYR Macedonia; initiating the process of founding the local youth councils in 35 municipalities (2015); calls for the best young artist in 5 categories, the best young poet and for the best young IT engineer; opening of the Youth information and counselling centre in Kavadarci etc.

Two prominent national **youth representation structures** exist in FYR Macedonia.

- *The National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM)* - NYCM is the nation-wide umbrella organisation representing organized youth in FYR Macedonia. NYCM gathers 67 organisations: 27 youth organisations, 18 organisations for youth, 2 national youth union organisations, 10 youth wings of political parties and 10 associate member organisations united to promote and advocate for youth rights in FYR Macedonia.



- *The Coalition of Youth Organisations (SEGA)* is a national organisation of youth groups and NGOs. It was established in 2004 “in order to contribute to the development and implementation” of the National Youth Strategy (2005) and is co-author of the 2009 action plan alongside the Agency for Youth and Sports.

The Ministry of Education and science is providing information on possibilities to study abroad. The cooperation is set with different universities in Japan, Russia, Sweden, Greece etc. Students/scientific staff can partake in different programmes like CEEPUS, Tempus, Erasmus+, Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU) in Prague etc.

National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility is a public institution with the aim to promote and implement the European educational programs in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and namely for Erasmus+.

In March 2015 Macedonia has become an official member of Eurodesk.<sup>3</sup>

With regards to the mobility of students, the policy brief of the Center for Research and Policy Making from Skopje “The mobility patterns of Macedonians students after visa liberalization” (2012) bring us some interesting insights and recommendations:

“Ten faculties of the 11 which replied to our request stated that they are beneficiaries from one or more of the following programs: Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, CEEPUS, ERASMUS, JOINEUSSE, ERAWEB, EUROWEB, VestNet, BASILEUS and have bilateral agreements with foreign universities. FYR Macedonia became eligible to use European mobility programs in 2008 when the University St. Cyril and Methodius signed the Erasmus Mundus mobility charter. However, there is still confusion with regards to the actual beneficiaries from the multitude of opportunities offered by the EU. None of the 11 faculties have a database which contains information about the students who have used mobility programs.

While students leave the country more frequently since December 2009 for holidays or to visit relatives, the number of students using mobility programs for study visits is still very low.

There is no clear division of competencies among the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Agency and the Rectory of the University Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of the Republic of Macedonia (UKIM).

The faculties and the Ministry for Education and Science do not have proper databases which would enable a process of following which and how many students have used mobility opportunities.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Eurodesk is an international non-profit association created in 1990. As support organisation to the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020) Eurodesk is one of the most comprehensive and most accessible source of free youth information about international learning mobility opportunities. <https://eurodesk.eu/about-us>

<sup>4</sup>Skopje “The mobility patterns of Macedonians students after visa liberalization” (2012)

## KOSOVO\*

Pursuant to the Article 3 of The Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth (2009) youth in Kosovo\* is defined as individuals aged between 15 and 24 years. According to the last available statistical data of the Kosovo\* Agency of Statistics young there are 336.399 young people (2011) in Kosovo\*, which represent around 19,33% of the total population of Kosovo\*.

There are 2 strategic documents regulating youth issues in Kosovo\*, Kosovo Strategy for Youth (2013-2017), and the Kosovo Youth Action Plan 2013-2015.

From the Strategy (February 2013): According to researches and different reports in youth sector, 88 NGOs of youth sector have been identified in 34 municipalities. Also, there is a net of youth centres distributed in different municipalities. The intention of these youth centres is to provide a space for youth so that they can meet and socialize, provide cultural and sports activities, professional support of the same level for health and psychic-social issues, and also relevant trainings. 19 youth centres have been registered during the research in 17 municipalities (51% of municipalities). There are 33 Local Youth Action Councils (LYAC) in municipalities in Kosovo\*.

The Strategy tackles following areas with regards the youth work:

1. Youth Participation
2. Non-formal education
3. Employment and Entrepreneurship
4. Education and health promotion
5. Human security
6. Social Integration, Voluntarism, Sports, Culture and Recreation

In Kosovar youth reality, and youth policy reality it recognises as the main:

Advantages: Legal infrastructure; Institutional infrastructure; Institutional capacities; Over 60 % of young age population; Knowledge of foreign languages; Comprehensive education and public and private infrastructure of completed education; Studying outside the country and return of the knowledge in our country; Apprenticeship at work; Cooperation of Department of Youth with Vocational Training Centre; Strategic documents Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology etc.

Challenges of its implementation: Cooperation with Directorate for Culture, Youth and Sport; Insufficient stimulation of the youth for business; Inadequate education programs for developments of labour market; Inter-ministry cooperation; Decision-making of the youth in central and local level; Health insurances; Support of the talented young people.

Opportunities: Build-up an infrastructure for the youth; Improvement of legislation; Encouragement of the youth on business; Training to prepare the youth for labour market; Inter-sector cooperation; Cooperation with donators; Services for the Youth; Organisation of

non-formal education for the youth who have dropped out school; Incitement of voluntarism; Stimulation of Department of Youth personnel.

Risks: Economic development of the country; Youth fund; Small budget of the Ministry of Culture Youth and Sport/Directorate of Youth; Unemployment of the youth over 58%.

### Institutional framework:

The Youth Department within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport has responsibility for youth affairs and policy in Kosovo\*. The department is mandated to implement the Youth Strategy & Action Plan, conduct analysis of the youth sector, develop programs for identified groups of youth, coordinate with departments, municipalities & organisations to develop and implement policies, support the formation of clubs & associations for youth, encourage financial and other support for the youth sector, and provide information for youth about services and programs.

The budget allocated to the Department of Youth in 2016 was EUR 2.852.838,00.

“Structure: **Kosovar Youth Council (KYC)** is a youth non-governmental organisation (NGO) established to activate young Kosovars to respond to their problems brought on by massive expulsion from their homes to Albania in 1999. We act to build a civil society through youth participation, by creating and supporting youth NGOs and coordinating their leadership.

Under the KYC umbrella works the **Student Council of Kosovo\***. It is a national structure that represents all students of secondary schools of Kosovo\*, in order to protect their interests and to cooperate with officials, parents and professors for the benefit of entire education system. Actually, Kosovar Youth Council the is most active organisation that deals with youth issues.

**KQVR- (in English: Central Youth Action Council)- (CYAC)** is responsible for representing the voice of youth to the central institutions (mainly the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport). This includes, without limitation, the representation of youth organisations to the government, providing recommendations on issues and legislation that affects youth, and participation in the drafting of the Kosovo\* Action Plan for Youth, as well as the annual budget for youth at the central level (Article 3, Administrative Instruction). Therefore, under the KQVR functions **KVRL**, as a structure for municipalities in Kosovo\*.

Programmes supporting youth mobility in Kosovo\*: Erasmus +, British Embassy, USA Embassy, Young Cell Scheme, KAEF- Kosovo\* American Education Fund, TLP- Transformational Leadership Program”<sup>5</sup>

According to the “EVALUATION REPORT OF KOSOVO EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2016” Article 6.7. Students Mobility and Employment – “The targets aimed that until 2016 to ensure mobility and employment options for pupils in and outside Kosovo\*. Within this priority were

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<sup>5</sup> Information provided by the Kosovar Youth Council

listed a series of activities: collect labour market information by utilising information and resources from the Ministries; of Labour, Trade, Chamber of Commerce and Agency of Statistics, develop programmes that ensure increased interest and mobility of the labour force, increased employability and transfer of credit points, develop EMIS and train school administrators to maintain records on employment of pupils, evaluate pilots of learner tracking, develop strategies for support of businesses of VET graduates, promote and support programmes for start-up businesses, develop longer-term progress pathways for pupils to higher levels of ISCED 4 and 5, establish government scholarship schemes for 50 students every year to engage in a six months internship outside the country. In this regard, despite some progress and very limited initiatives, there are stagnations and it has been made a very little progress. Grants for development of business plans and the establishment of new businesses are mainly supported from partners and are very limited in number, whereas the scholarship system mainly covers a limited number of pupils from RAE community.”

## MONTENEGRO

In accordance with the definition from the Youth Law<sup>6</sup>, young people are persons 15-30 years old and the approximate number of young people in Montenegro, according to Montenegrin Statistical Office's (MONSTAT) data from last Census, is 132 702 (68,198 males and 64,504 females) - accounting for 21.4% of the total population<sup>7</sup>. This figure does not include persons who have reached 30 years.

The population of Montenegro is to a large extent affected by demographic aging. Also significant is the impact of migration because it is an emigration area. The number of men is higher than the number of women in the younger age groups (0-19 and 20-39)<sup>8</sup>.

The living conditions in the countryside are very unfavourable, underdeveloped infrastructure, limited healthcare and educational services, which leads to the fact that young people are moving out, the age structure is unfavourable<sup>9</sup>.

Two-thirds of young people aged 15 to 29 years (66%) live in urban areas in Montenegro. In terms of regional distribution, most young people aged 15 to 29 years lives in central Montenegro (48.8%), then in the north of the country (28.5%), while 22.8% of them inhabit the southern part of the country. However, this is not real picture because these numbers represent information about the place of residence and are not taking into account the internal mobility of

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<sup>6</sup>Youth Law (Official Gazette of Montenegro, no.42/2016)

<sup>7</sup>Montenegrin Statistical Office's (MONSTAT)

<sup>8</sup>Montenegrin Statistical Office's (MONSTAT) "Population projections of Montenegro by 2060 with a structural analysis of the population of Montenegro" ("Projekcije stanovništva Crne Gore do 2060. Godine sa strukturnom analizom stanovništva Crne Gore") Available at: <http://bit.ly/2l99Jam>

<sup>9</sup>2030 National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro

young people (mostly educational) and the fact that many young people are moving to capital Podgorica, or Nikšić, Bar, Kotor – for studies, but they do not change their local residence status (they stay registered in city they were born).

Legal framework at national level that is important for youth policy and young people, including their mobility is represented by:

- Youth Law, (adopted in Jun 2016);
- Youth Strategy (2017- 2021);
- Local action plans for youth in several municipalities;
- List of the laws that are regulating education, employment and social security and in line with them list of national strategies covering specific areas like: employment, education, social welfare, sustainable development.

Youth Law defines age limit of young people, the term of youth policy, relevant structures responsible for youth policy implementation at national and local level. Youth Law states that Youth Policy in Montenegro is planned, implemented and promoted on the basis of real needs of young people, empirical and practical knowledge on the situation of young people, research and regular monitoring and assessment of the situation of young people, with the active involvement of young people in this process.

Youth Strategy contains identification of key priorities for the period 2017-2021. This is a second Youth strategy (previous was NPAM - National Action Plan for Youth in Montenegro<sup>10</sup>, and was implemented in period from 2006 - 2011.).

Integral parts of the new Strategy is *Implementation Plan*, with general measures and sub-measures which should lead to fulfilment of key outcomes within the planned deadline, with identification of entities accountable for their implementation; the annual Action Plan for 2017, which contains concrete activities that are going to be implemented within the first year of implementation; and the Plan for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy. This plan envisages gradual introduction of international indicators for comprehensive monitoring of the position of young people into the official statistical system of Montenegro<sup>11</sup>.

Youth mobility, in previous youth policy document (NPAM 2006-2011) was one of the key areas of intervention, titled: *Information and Mobility*, and it included activities that would improve situation in the area of education, cultural and tourist mobility of youth.

New youth strategy approached this question through incorporation of the mobility segment in some of the specific areas covered – education, information and culture. In line with that, in measures for ensuring access to quality education for youth we can find **“promotion of youth**

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<sup>10</sup> NPAM - National Action Plan for Youth in Montenegro. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jFttBZ>

<sup>11</sup> Youth Strategy (2017-2021). Available at: <http://bit.ly/2kzXiDa>

**educational mobility**” planned with the aim to significantly increase the percentage of young people in Montenegro who are using the possibilities of educational mobility.

One of the activities planned by Youth Strategy is that local self-governments and relevant ministries **provide continuous support to youth mobility** through local budgets and scholarships provided by the business sector, and through EU and other funding available for youth mobility and international cooperation of educational institutions.<sup>12</sup>

In the area of education mobility, in the Strategy there is a plan to develop training plans for teaching staff how to apply for EU and other funding for youth mobility, practical training and international cooperation of educational institutions; Set up info-points in educational institutions for providing information on youth mobility possibilities; Organising regional events for young people aimed to promote(formal and non-formal) educational programmes outside of one’s place of residence and outside of Montenegro; and update of the Directorate for Youth’s web portal with the information on youth mobility schemes available.

Among measures for ensuring adequate access to system of support for young people transitioning to adulthood, there is planned establishment of efficient inter-sectoral information and counselling service for young people and parents that would, among other information provide also information on possibilities in the areas of formal and non-formal education, employment, health, culture **and mobility**.

In the area of **culture**, among measures for ensuring that young people have access to quality cultural contents, Youth strategy defines activities in order to ensure support to young creators of independent cultural and media contents, as well as youth mobility in culture and recommend that a **separate fund for supporting young culture and media content creators and youth mobility in culture needs to be established**.

In this area, it is clearly recognised that access to content from the domain of culture greatly depends on the young person’s place of residence. Strategy states that that all of young people, especially those in rural areas and marginalized communities should be encompassed thanks to the joint efforts of the institutions of culture, education and labour and social welfare, as well as inter-sectoral cooperation, in regard to development, promotion and availability of programme content intended for young people, and that innovative models should be developed and used, such as mobile cinemas, travelling theatre companies, etc.

Among other things, the intention is to increase percent of young people from Montenegro taking part in mobility programmes (e.g. Erasmus+, RYCO).

At local level, Local Action Plans for youth all have the topic of mobility as one of the priorities. There are Local Action Plans for youth in 14 out of 23 municipalities, at the moment still valid in ten of them, in four they have expired, and in other they are in the form of draft or they didn’t

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<sup>12</sup> Youth Strategy Implementation Plan: B5. Promote youth educational mobility – activity no.11

ever existed in the form of classical LAP. E.g. municipality Herceg Novi had a *Local plan for social services for children and Youth*, and many other municipalities had or have Local plans for persons with disability, or Local plan for children that often includes segment of mobility.

In all local strategic documents it is stated that youth mobility is hindered by weak financial situation. Examples of international mobility enabled young people thanks to the efforts of non-governmental organisations through projects allow them to travel abroad individually or as a team to compete in the knowledge of folklore or foreign languages, are attendees or youth camps.

In the case of young people with disabilities, mobility is particularly difficult because there is still a hindrance to enter the majority of public facilities on the territory of the municipality. Public transport also is not adapted.

Youth Strategy, however, do not tackle issue of mobility from the angle of improving employability through mobility or labour mobility.

Except from strategies and plans for student mobility and the Youth Strategy there is no strategic documents that target and propose measures for the mobility of wider category of young people - high school students, young people who do not study and similar.

The strategies that are to some extent touching the mobility of young are mainly related to specific areas, such as education, European integration, sustainable development and so on. Young people are identified as strategic target group for the governmental *Strategy for informing the public about the EU and Montenegro's preparations for membership*<sup>13</sup> which identifies opportunities for education (and mobility in education) and employment within the framework of the EU as a central field on which young people should be informed, and specifically target: primary school, secondary school and university students, and unemployed youth. Some of the goals are introducing young people at all levels with opportunities for education, youth mobility, available to EU programs for primary, secondary, higher education (Erasmus +).

In addition, the strategy states the importance of increasing awareness of the importance of competitiveness for entry to the labour market and the importance of services and networks that EU has developed e.g. EURES - cooperation network designed to facilitate the free movement of workers within the EU 28 countries plus Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Partners in this network may include Public Employment Services (PES), Private employment services (PRES), trade unions, employers' organisations and other relevant actors in the labour market, that provide information, placement and recruitment services to employers and jobseekers whereas the European and National Coordination Offices oversee the organisation of the activities at European and national level respectively. Moreover, EURES has

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<sup>13</sup>Strategy for informing the public about the EU and Montenegro's preparations for membership (Strategija informisanja javnosti o pristupanju Crne Gore Evropskoj uniji 2014 – 2018). Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jRAfVs>

an important role to play in providing specific information and facilitate placements for the benefit of employers and trans-frontier workers in European cross-border regions.<sup>14</sup>

When considering educational and working mobility it is to be mention that there is developed system for recognition of foreign issued diploma and certificates. The procedure is prescribed for **recognition of foreign educational certificates and qualifications** equalizing the purpose of continuing education, or employment with the Law on Recognition of Foreign Educational Certificates and Equalization of qualifications, which is aligned with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts, the Bologna Declaration and the Joint Charter of tasks and responsibilities ENIC/NARIC. The right to recognition of these documents, or equalization of qualification is the right of:

- Montenegrin citizen,
- foreign citizen and
- stateless person.

#### Institutional framework:

The structures for implementation of youth policy, in line with the Youth Law consist of:

- The Government of Montenegro;
- State administration bodies and other administrative bodies responsible for certain areas of importance to young people;
- Municipalities, the Capital City, Royal Capital and
- Other entities involved in the planning, implementation and improvement of youth policy.

Directorate for Youth has a central institutional position and it coordinate implementation of national Youth Strategy with the support and in cooperation with the other entities, including governmental and non-governmental institutions. Directorate for Youth has been a part of the Ministry of sport since December 2016.

If we have in mind mobility in the sphere of education, employment or culture, the institutional framework is more concrete, and at the level of the government we can specifically recognize role of Ministry of education, Ministry of science, Ministry of labour and social welfare and Ministry of culture.

Line ministries are obliged to cooperate in the implementation of youth policy and appoint a contact person for young people. Contact person for the young co-ordinate activities related to youth policy and cooperates with the Department for Youth and the Council for young people in the planning, implementation and evaluation of youth strategy.

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<sup>14</sup> EURES <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/eures-services>



Ministry of education has Department of International Cooperation and European Integration that works on development of cooperation in the sphere of education, and also is providing information for international student mobility programs, and scholarships. They published in 2015 *Study on mobility programs*<sup>15</sup> with information about possibilities for young people from Montenegro.

National Erasmus+ Office (NEO)<sup>16</sup> is a focal point in the country, alongside the EU Delegation and complementarily with it, for all actors, potential applicants, beneficiaries and stakeholders at large with regards the EACEA and the European Commission's activities and programmes in the area of higher education. It provides assistance to national authorities, higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders with implementation of the Erasmus+ activities in higher education. Its mission is to improve the visibility, relevance, effectiveness, and impact of Erasmus+ programme and contribute to its promotion and dissemination in Montenegro.

Ministry of culture<sup>17</sup> is Contact Point of the Europe for Citizens Programme of the EU.

Ministry of science<sup>18</sup> has special role in networking of the academic community and researchers. As the national authority it is responsible for science is also responsible i.e. for the implementation of research support instruments and international research cooperation. Department for International Programs and European Integration perform the administrative tasks relating to the implementation of international scientific cooperation and European integration and professional activities related to the implementation of programmes of general interest.

Ministry established "*Scientific research network*"<sup>19</sup> that represents an information system to provide data related to scientists and researchers from Montenegro and the diaspora. The idea that in one place, accessible to all, in a practical, good looking and modern way present all scientists and their achievements in the field of science and research.

At local level, it is important to stress the role of:

- local government units, usually secretariats for social affairs and their Office for Youth;
- local employment biros (local offices of Public Employment Services of Montenegro);
- schools and universities operating in those municipalities.

Local government units, usually secretariats for social affairs, in order to coordinate, plan and implement youth policy organize a separate organisational unit for youth - Office for Youth. Offices for Youth exist in Bijelo Polje and Nikšić, while in Budva and Tivat they operate as integral part of the Offices for Prevention of Substance Abuse and Youth Issues.

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<sup>15</sup> Study on mobility programs, Ministry of culture of Montenegro. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jS0Ykz>

<sup>16</sup> National Erasmus+ Office (NEO) [www.neomontenegro.ac.me](http://www.neomontenegro.ac.me)

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of culture of Montenegro <http://www.mku.gov.me/en/ministry>

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of science of Montenegro [www.mna.gov.me](http://www.mna.gov.me)

<sup>19</sup> Montenegrin "Scientific research network" <https://naucnamreza.me/en>

Local Council on Youth Issues is an independent and advisory body that is established by the competent municipal body, with the goal to promote and improve the development of youth policy, monitor and evaluate the municipal strategy, strengthen cooperation and improve the position of young people at the local level. This body is comprised of the representatives of municipal bodies competent for youth policy, youth organisations, organisations for young people and other forms of organisations of young people, as well as experts in the field of youth policy. Although they are not recognised in the Youth Law, there are local youth councils in several municipalities working as youth representative bodies that represent the interests of young people in the local government.

Youth clubs and youth centres are operating in several municipalities, but support from local government, and national government, and their funding during the years of work is not regular, that makes their programs not working continually in supporting environment and therefore being not sustainable. Department for Youth financially supported work of several Youth clubs in 2016., by transferring funds to local municipalities (Pljevlja, Tivat etc.). New Youth Strategy planned and allocated financial resources for 2017 for support of youth clubs.

Public Employment Services (PES) are important stakeholders in informing youth on training and employment possibilities, on local and national level. However, their work in the area of promoting and providing framework for working mobility is limited on so called “seasons’ jobs”. In the past, PES were active in promotion of cross border mobility and one of the examples can be cross border project “*Exchange of Practices for Better Governance of the Employment Policy in Cross Border Region*” that was implemented together with partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and financed by EU IPA CBC BIH-MNE funds.

Civil society organisations working with youth are very active in regional and international cooperation, and providing young people opportunities for mobility through participation in youth exchanges, trainings, seminars etc. The longest history of work on regional and international mobility through organising international voluntary work-camps and youth exchanges has Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid (ADP - Zid) that is member of two biggest worldwide international networks for exchange of volunteers: Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations<sup>20</sup> and Service Civil International (SCI)<sup>21</sup> - dedicated to promoting a culture of peace through international voluntary projects around the world since 1920. ADP-Zid host and receives hundreds of volunteers per year, for short term and long term volunteering, but it is also Contact Point for Erasmus+ “Youth in Action” programme with a mandate to inform young people and youth organisations, to promote program and provides support to organisations that wish to propose projects.

If we observe the national representation of CSOs and role in general youth policy, at the moment there is no functional national youth CSO network as a central association. According to the Youth Law, the status of a central association is given to an organisation which is joined

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<sup>20</sup> Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations [www.alliance-network.eu](http://www.alliance-network.eu)

<sup>21</sup> Service Civil International (SCI) [www.sci.ngo](http://www.sci.ngo)

by at least two thirds of associations at the national level. The status of an association at the national level is given to an organisation that has been working in the interest of young people for at least two years and has at least two thirds of registered youth organisations at the local level. Conditions for work of associations at the local or national level should be ensured by the relevant municipal bodies and/or the Directorate.

In June 2014 Montenegro signed an Agreement establishing partial participation in Erasmus+: the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport (2014-2020). The Agreements were signed on the occasion of the 3rd Ministerial Meeting of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training (WBPET), which took place in Brussels on 19-20 June and convened the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the region. Once the Agreement enters into force, it will enable participation in those actions not managed by a National Agency, i.e. IT support platforms (including eTwinning ) and support for policy reform. During this period, institutions and organisations from Montenegro also benefited as partner countries of the external cooperation activities, i.e. higher education and youth mobility to and from the EU, and capacity building in the fields of higher education and youth.

Montenegro participates in the *Creative Europe*<sup>22</sup> and *Europe for Citizens*<sup>23</sup> programmes of European Union.

Montenegro is a member of the Partial Agreement on youth card and the mobility of young from the Council of Europe, whose purpose is to promote and facilitate the mobility of young in Europe. In accordance with this agreement, the Directorate for Youth and Sports (now Directorate of Youth) is providing financial and advisory support to organisations dealing with the promotion and distribution of European Youth Card (earlier cards Euro <26).

The potential benefit of these cards is multiple for facilitating increased youth participation in employment, volunteering, culture or youth tourism opportunities, but in Montenegro still not in use in its full capacity. Although the previous strategy recognised the importance of development and adoption of the plan of better use of youth hostels and camping sites in order to improve youth tourism and financing of renovation of buildings is a priority for young people, the implementation of these activities did not take place, while in the new youth strategy these components are not even foreseen.

Montenegro is characterised by limited internal regional mobility. In sectors and industries where there are vacancies there are factors that adversely affect regional labour mobility (inadequate accommodation, work in shifts and seasonal jobs).

According to MONSTAT scenario, by 2030 Montenegro could expect more intense increase in the number of immigrants than emigrants, resulting in a positive and growing migration balance. It is expected that the young people from Montenegro, who do not find their own life

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<sup>22</sup>Creative Europe [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe_en)

<sup>23</sup>Europe for Citizens [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en)

prospects in the country, will leave to EU countries that provide them with better living conditions and more opportunities in career advancement<sup>24</sup>. At the same time, Montenegro will continue to attract the labour force mostly of lower educational structure for more simple professions, especially from the region, which has, in the past, filled out workplaces for which there was insufficient interest among the Montenegrin citizens.<sup>25</sup>

## SERBIA

According to the last Census and data of the Republic Institute for Statistics (2011) young people in Serbia represent 18% of the total population in Serbia. It is for 2% lower than for the previous period. This negative trend is caused both by the brain drain and by negative natality rate in Serbia.

In Serbia youth work structures and youth policy is quite developed in comparison with other countries of the region, however, it is always a question of the quality of its implementation.

Development of youth policy in Serbia has started much before than it is reflected in the legislation through different initiatives (e.g. in 2007 the conference “Does all ways leading towards Youth Policy?”, and the Start Up Youth Office Programme as a capacity building programme for Youth Policy holders within local communities).

Development of the national legal and institutional framework in the field of youth has started with different initiatives at national level. In November 2001, the Youth Section (in the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia) was established as the only governmental body in the Republic of Serbia responsible for youth issues, although after the elections in 2004 it was closed down. As a reaction there was intensive advocacy of youth NGOs gathered within the Youth Coalition of Serbia to establish a national body that would be in charge of dealing with youth policy. Young people in Serbia joined the NGO initiative and blocked the work of the government with their request to get an appropriate ministry to bear the name “youth”. This idea had to be accepted by the youth wings of the political parties, so that they could put pressure on their political leaders to understand the importance of the topic. And then, after premature parliamentary elections in May 2007, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia was formed. The birth of this particular ministry speaks volumes about youth activism, and how young people can change the institutional landscape and how significant the partnership between the governmental and non-governmental sectors is. So, the situation had been significantly changed and youth care became one of the priorities of state policy.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> 2030 National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro

<sup>25</sup> 2030 National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro

<sup>26</sup> The Council of Europe, *The History of Youth Work in Europe: Relevance for Youth Policy Today*, Volume 3, 2012

This was a starting point for the processes of drafting and adopting the first National Strategy for Youth (2009-2014) in 2008, together with the Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy for Youth (2009). In 2011 the Law on youth was adopted (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No 50/2011).<sup>27</sup>

Development of the Youth Strategy (for facilitation of the process) in Serbia and its Action Plan has been recognised as a best practice example by the Council of Europe, given the fact that it has actively involved all relevant stakeholders in the field of youth, and young people themselves (e.g. consultations were held in 165 communities across Serbia).

Nowadays, Serbia has all the main mechanisms to support youth as a target group. The Law on Youth defines the Strategy for Youth, the main implementing bodies and mechanisms of the Strategy.

The Law on Youth – The Law on Youth is based on defining the framework and conditions for support of young people in association, civil action, development and reaching their potentials for personal and social benefit; it defines the structure of the youth sector in Serbia (both public and non-governmental sector) with clear division of the rights, obligations, and competences of all actors; it also supports the independence of youth/for youth associations, networks and umbrella organisations. The Law envisages founding of the Council for Youth of the Government of Republic of Serbia, as well as possibility to form Councils for Youth at Provincial and local levels. It also defines the founding and the role of the Local Youth Offices within the local self-governments. At international level, the Law is in line with European youth policy frameworks, and envisages possibility for setting up an Agency for Youth for implementation of the EU programmes in the field of youth in Serbia. All the mentioned structures are existent and functional at the moment.

Pursuant to the Law, Article 12, the funds for Strategy implementation shall be provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the budget of the autonomous province and local self-government unit, and from other sources, in accordance with the Law.

Besides the Strategy for Youth and its Action Plan, the Ministry has passed a number of bylaws and Rulebooks, namely Rulebook on content and management of Unique Evidence of Youth Associations, Associations for Youth and their alliances, as well as Rulebook on financing and co-financing programmes and projects of public interest in the youth field.

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025<sup>28</sup>(NYS) - The NYS defines nine (9) strategic goals as desired changes to be achieved with respect to young people in the areas of interest to young people. The successful implementation of NYS in the next ten (10) years will result in the improvement of:

1. Employability and employment of young women and men;

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.sio.vojvodina.gov.rs/index.php/omladina/akcioni-plan-politike-za-mlade>

<sup>28</sup> The National Youth Strategy, pages 47-51

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

With regards to the mobility, the NYS defines three specific objectives, whereas one is related to improved economic, cultural and administrative preconditions for mobility of young women and men, while the other one aims at providing conditions for enhanced youth mobility and promotion of international youth cooperation. The last objective directly related to mobility of young people aims at enhanced internal mobility of youth for employment purposes.

The key stakeholders in this matter are the ministry responsible for youth, the ministry for foreign affairs, ministry of labour, and the ministry responsible for education.

The Strategy sets more than 30 measures directly targeted at improving the mobility of young people in Serbia.

### **Institutional framework**

Ministry for Youth and Sports is the Ministry in charge of youth issues in Serbia. It has developed different mechanisms to support young people.

The Ministry has signed several bilateral cooperation agreements in order to provide young people from respective countries student and pupil exchanges, to support mobility of young people, as well as their participation in seminars, conferences, to implement joint projects etc. Until now, this kind of agreement has been signed with Greece (2009), Republic of Srpska/BiH (2010), Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and FYR Macedonia (2011), and Joint Declaration on Cooperation with the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In 2012 the Cooperation Agreements between Serbia and Slovakia, Portugal and Bosnia and Herzegovina were signed, and in 2013 with Turkey.

Partial agreement on youth mobility through European Youth Card (EURO <26) – Serbia is very active in promoting the Card, and it has even received an award on development of the European Youth Card at the national level.

Council for Youth - pursuant to the Law on Youth, the Government of Republic of Serbia, following the proposal of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, sets up a Council for Youth, as a counselling body for development, implementation, and improvement of youth policy in Serbia. It is consisted of representatives of public administration with some competence in the field of youth, the provincial public body in charge of youth matters, youth associations' representatives

and their alliances, Youth Offices representatives, experts and joint representative of national councils of national minorities in Serbia. At least one third of the Council are members of youth associations and their alliances.

Resource Centres – the Ministry of Youth and Sports is supporting 25 organisations which act as regional resource centres for youth organisations and youth work within the project „Youth Rules!“. The resource centres implement the sub-granting scheme for local projects for youth volunteering projects which promote activism and volunteering. Since 2010 about 1095 small youth projects were financed in Serbia with almost 75 million dinars (about EUR 620.000).

With regards the open calls and funding of youth work, the Ministry has following strands:

- up to now, the Ministry has financed 462 projects of the local self-governments to support young people, youth work and youth organisations in their communities with about 270 million dinars (cca. EUR 2.213.115,00); In 2016, out of this number, it financed 37 projects with about 43.408.634,55dinars (cca. EUR 355.808,50);
- in 2016, the Ministry has financed 2 projects for implementation of the youth policy in Serbia in amount of 13.535.959,50 dinars (cca.. EUR 110.950,00);
- since 2014, (co)financing of around 80 youth work camps in cooperation with Young Researchers of Serbia and South East European Youth Network and contributing to mobility of young people with this;
- 2 calls for financing 59 projects in the fields of youth employment, and safety, participation, education of young people with about 99.655.740,00 dinars (cca.. EUR 816.850,33).

Secretariat for Youth and Sports of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina - In Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, importance of young people for life of the Province has been recognised through founding of the Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sports in 2002 (9 years before the national level). Systematic approach was ensured through implementation of 2 Action Plan for Youth in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (2005-2008 and 2011-2014), which was a pioneer activity in the whole region of South East Europe at the moment, as well as at the national level.

Currently, there is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Action Plan in implementation, for the period 2015-2020.

Pursuant to the Chapter VI of the Action Plan – special focus is put on mobility of young people with the overall goal of Increased participation of young people in mobilities, and with the specific objective 6.4 to Support mobility of young people and informing young people in this field;

In period 2011-2014, in the area of Co-financing of youth projects in the field of youth and sports in Vojvodina, 324 projects were financed, with total value of 82.149.355,12rsd (about EUR 678.920,29).<sup>29</sup>

Council for Youth of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina – founded on 15th November, following the initiative of the Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sports of AP Vojvodina in order to

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<sup>29</sup> Source: Youth Policy Action Plan of AP Vojvodina for period 2015-2020, April 2015.

strengthen, coordinate activities in relation to development and implementation of youth policy in Vojvodina and propose measures for their improvement. It is consisted of the officials from the provincial secretariats with competence of education, health, social policies, science, labour and employment of young people, Deputy of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina etc. representatives of Radio Television of Vojvodina, 3 representatives of local youth councils and 3 representatives of Standing Conference of youth associations and associations for young people in Vojvodina.

Youth Offices - At the moment there are 139 Youth Offices in local self-governments in Serbia. They are in competence of development and implementation of local youth action plans, and for the youth issues at the municipal/city levels.

National Association of Youth Offices — founded 17.03.2014 with mission to respond to the needs of its members for networking, positioning of the youth offices as a sustainable system, and balanced development of all the youth offices in order to provide equal starting circumstances for every young person in Serbia.

Serbian Umbrella Youth Association (KOMS)<sup>30</sup> - KOMS is the highest independent representative body of youth in Serbia with a mission to represent the interests of youth by developing partner relationship with the State, cross-sector and international cooperation, encouraging youth participation and youth empowerment, and assisting organisational development of its member organisations. KOMS is an umbrella organisation and currently gathers 92 youth organisations with more than 160 000 individual members in their total membership. KOMS was founded in March 2011, after years of public consultations within youth sector in Serbia. From that moment on KOMS has been relevant actor and opinion maker in every aspect of youth policy in Serbia. On international level KOMS has been active since 2012, when it became member organisation of European Youth Forum.

KOMS has successfully advocated for the establishment of the National Advisory Council on Youth, the perseverance of the Ministry of Youth and Sport despite political changes, amending the Law on Volunteerism and Law on Youth, opening of local youth offices in certain municipalities and participation of young people in different decision making processes (their involvement in local youth committees, co-management mechanisms etc.). KOMS took part in the evaluation of the previous and the creation of the new National Youth Strategy, as well as in different monitoring and watchdog activities concerning budgets for youth, local youth action plans and good governance within the youth sector in Serbia.

NAPOR<sup>31</sup> National association of youth workers was founded in 2009, as a result of an initiative of civil society organisations, which implement youth work. It is vocational and representative union of associations whose mission is creation and development of conditions for quality assurance and recognition of youth work with the aim of developing potential of youth and youth workers, who contribute to welfare of community and society. The vision is that each

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<sup>30</sup> Source: KOMS, [www.koms.rs](http://www.koms.rs)

<sup>31</sup> Source: NAPOR



young person has their own youth worker. NAPOR is composed of 68 organisations of youth and for youth which implement youth work throughout Serbia. Some of its main achievements are 3 vocational standards in the area of professional youth work (Youth Leader, Youth Worker and Specialist for Youth Work and Policy) developed; Mechanism for validation of previously attained competencies in youth work developed; Participation in the core working group for creation of the Law on Youth in Serbia, Standards for youth work programs and the mechanism for its implementation developed etc.

Some NGOs in Serbia have long tradition of promotion of mobility of young people as well. One of the best examples are Young Researchers of Serbia which, through its international voluntary service sector organise each year approx. 40 international voluntary camps hosting more than 800 volunteers from all over the world while sending approx. 500 Serbian volunteers abroad to these two-weeks long local community projects. Through this 28 years old programme they not only support international mobility through volunteering but national one as well allowing young people to travel and volunteer in Serbia in places other than their residence.

With regards to European and EU programmes young people from Serbia have access to mobility within the European Youth Foundation, Erasmus+ (including mobility of students, young people and youth workers), as well as mobility of young artists within the Creative Europe EU Programme, and Europe for Citizens programme.

The National Employment Service, pursuant to the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance, carries out mediation in employment of citizens of the Republic of Serbia abroad. At the moment the most active collaboration is between Serbia and Germany, where the majority of young medical workers (both doctors and technicians) leave to work to. With regards to the young people, the service has had several projects for inclusion of young marginalised people (YES) into the labour market.

## **2. EXISTING REGIONAL PLATFORMS FOR YOUTH MOBILITY AND INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY SCHEMES ACCESSIBLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE TARGETED REGION**

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Recent developments in the Western Balkan region provide encouraging incentives to young people for regional cooperation and mobility. However, there are no functional bilateral co-operation platforms initiated, developed or financed by the Western Balkan countries themselves that would support youth mobility.

More specifically, several regional platforms exist, but most of them are financed or co-financed by the EU.

It is important to mention that there are a number of regional initiatives launched by the civil society organisations, but not strictly focused on mobility, rather on networking around specific issues like: youth at risk, provision of social services, reconciliation in the region etc.

During the mapping of international mobility schemes accessible for young people of the targeted region, several accessible platforms and schemes were identified, while the most outstanding ones are:

- ☐ Western Balkan Countries - Research, Technology, Innovation - Information Platform (WBC-RTI.info platform);
- ☐ Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training;
- ☐ Regional Youth Co-operation Office RYCO;
- ☐ Regional Cooperation Council/SEE 2020 Strategy;
- ☐ Balkan Regional Platform for Youth Participation and Dialogue;
- ☐ IPA Funds for CBC and Regional CSOs thematic networking;
- ☐ The Council of Europe;
- ☐ The Partnership - The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership;
- ☐ Erasmus +;
- ☐ Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs;
- ☐ Creative Europe;
- ☐ Europe for Citizens;
- ☐ European Fund for the Balkans
- ☐ Visegrad Scholarship Program.

Western Balkan Countries - Research, Technology, Innovation - Information Platform (WBC-RTI.info platform)<sup>32</sup> (<http://wbc-rti.info/>) acts as a source of high quality targeted information on research, technology and innovation in/with/for the Western Balkan countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo\*, FYR Macedonia and Albania. The Platform is funded by Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy and it builds upon very successful and well known WBC-INCO.NET platform<sup>33</sup>.

The core objectives of the Information Platform are:

- to support dissemination of high quality information via the WBC-RTI.info website, monthly thematic newsletters and social media (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter)
- to provide analytical support on specific thematic RTDI issues such as Evaluation, RTDI statistics, Research funding etc.
- to support the bi-regional dialogue on science, technology and innovation by benefiting from and interacting with the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan countries.

Steering Platform on research, established in 2006, facilitates the interaction between the Western Balkan Countries, the EU member states, the candidate and potential candidate countries and other states associated to the Framework Programmes for RTD and the European Commission. Its main objective is to support the enhanced integration of the WBCs in the European Research Area. It is a strategic body to deal with European, multilateral and regional issues of Science and Technology policies in and with the WBCs. It acts as an information exchange centre, clearing house for joint ideas and activities, and coordination forum for needs, suggestions and proposals of the WBCs to the European Commission, the EU28, candidate and potential candidate countries and the countries associated to Horizon 2020 and vice versa. In this spirit, the Platform continues and intensifies the progress achieved under the EU-Balkan Countries Action Plan on Science and Technology since 2006. It is expected that the Steering Platform will continue with its work also in the years to come.

### **Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training**

Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training<sup>34</sup> was launched in 2012, as the EU's initiative for cooperation in education with Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo\*, Montenegro and Serbia. The Director-General of EAC Chairs the annual Ministerial meetings which identify common priorities, discuss latest policy and reform measures and decide on topics for regional cooperation with EU assistance. Although the countries in the region are committed to voluntarily converge with EU and international standards, the

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<sup>32</sup> WBC-RTI.info platform <http://wbc-rti.info/>

<sup>33</sup> Project funded under the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development; Contract Number: 212029

<sup>34</sup> Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training, [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/international-cooperation/western-balkans\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/international-cooperation/western-balkans_en)

implementation of new policies and reforms is difficult. Each country is at a different stage and with limited resources they requested assistance, so the Platform encourages regional cooperation and communication, sharing of good practices in the region and the EU and pooling of resources. It also provides follow-up in terms of joint projects, studies and events.

So far, many things were organized, e.g. five Ministerial meetings (once a year) and different activities including: Regional conference on higher education, Study on teacher training in the Western Balkans, Regional seminar on teacher training, Regional conference on Erasmus+, Regional conference on the role and impact of EU higher education programmes, Erasmus+ Contact Seminar with the Western Balkans, Study on higher education provision and labour market opportunities in the Western Balkans<sup>35</sup>, A database of higher education provision in the Western Balkans, First structured dialogue on a Western Balkans Regional Alumni Association.

The longer term perspective of the policy dialogue is to assist the Western Balkans with their reform efforts and prepare them for EU Membership responsibilities including full participation in the EU's education programmes.

### **Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)**

Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) is an independently functioning institutional mechanism as of 2017., founded by the Western Balkans six participating countries (WB 6): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region through youth exchange programs.

The mission of RYCO is:

- to support the regional exchange of youth, and their sharing of ideas, as a ground for future cooperation prospects in our region, based on the values of co-existence, tolerance and respect for human rights and diversity, as well as commitment to inclusion and security,
- to step up regional cooperation among youth and youth-dedicated institutions and ensure implementation of joint programs for young people with the focus on the principles of democratic governance, sustainable economic development, education and innovation,
- to coordinate youth cooperation in the Western Balkans.

The structure of RYCO consists of a Governing Board, a Secretariat and an Advisory Board.

The Secretariat of RYCO consists of a Head Office in Tirana, Albania, and of Local Branches in each of the five other Contracting Parties. The Secretariat is made up of the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General as well as administrative, support and program staff.

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<sup>35</sup>Study on higher education provision and labour market opportunities in the Western Balkans. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2khMaKL>

The Agreement on establishment of RYCO was signed by the WB 6 Prime Ministers on WB Summit held in Paris, on July 4 2016. The implementation process of the Agreement currently is taking place, with the aim that RYCO becomes operational in February/March 2017.

The work of RYCO is based on seven main pillars:

1. Road to Reconciliation - Youth exchanges are proved as one of the best tools for reconciliation. Time has shown that through exchange programs which include the promotion of tolerance, multiculturalism, mobility and dealing with the past, young generations become empowered to strive for the reconciliation and the reconnection of the region.
2. Road to Cooperation - RYCO will support both individual and group regional youth exchanges such as internships, fellowships, trainings, apprenticeships etc., or group exchanges such as study-visits, seminars, workshops etc. It will serve as a regional, state-founded, organisation aiming to support and enhance youth exchanges in the WB aiming to promote reconciliation, democratic values, participation, active citizenship and intercultural learning.
3. Road to Learning - Education, Research and Science programme will support exchanges between primary and secondary pupils, university students, young scientists and researchers. This includes exchanges in non-formal education and youth workers as well as young professionals, entrepreneurs, vocational school students, trainers and VETs. Non-formal groups of young people are also eligible applicants for RYCO grants.
4. Road to Democracy - Participation and Activism programme will enhance and contribute to the development of active citizenship, participation in the decision-making processes and volunteering by young people.
5. Road to Friendships - One of the most valuable aspects of youth exchanges are new friendships which remain after the program. Sports are perfect for building the team spirit and new connections, thus RYCO Sports program will support joint activities in the field of amateur sports.
6. Road to Understanding - In order to connect youth through many different fields and deepen the understanding they have for each other, RYCO Culture programme will support joint activities and coproduction in fields of arts and culture.
7. Road to Interculturalism - Intercultural competence and the capacity to act are key social and vocational skills. They represent a particular challenge in today's societies, in which the encounter and cooperation between people with different values as well as mutual dependency are increasing.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> [www.roadtoryco.com](http://www.roadtoryco.com)

## Regional Cooperation Council / SEE 2020 Strategy

Regional Cooperation Council / SEE 2020 Strategy – was found in 2008, as the successor of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

The RCC focuses on promotion and enhancement of regional cooperation in South East Europe (SEE) and supports European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the aspiring countries. The RCC provides operational capacities to and works under the political guidance of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECp).

In line with its Statute and guided by the principles of all-inclusiveness, the main tasks of the RCC are to represent the region, assist the SEECp, monitor regional activities, exert leadership in regional cooperation, provide a regional perspective in donor assistance – notably the EU's Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) programme – and support increased involvement of civil society in regional activities. The RCC functions as a focal point for regional cooperation in SEE.

The areas of cooperation in the framework of the RCC are economic and social development; energy and infrastructure; justice and home affairs; security cooperation; building human capital, as well as cross-cutting issues such as parliamentary cooperation, media development, civil society activities and gender mainstreaming.

The South East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy, adopted at the South East European Ministerial in Sarajevo in November 2013 is the main strategic document on which its work is based. It aims at promoting creation of jobs and prosperity in a European perspective for the Western Balkans. It has five pillars, which are: Smart Growth (emphasising education, innovation, research and development, culture and creative sectors), Sustainable Growth (ensuring economic sustainability through enterprise creation and export increase, as well as energy efficiency and climate control and integrated transport), Inclusive Growth (supporting employment generation, social inclusion, good health and well-being), Integrated Growth (promoting closer regional integration in terms of trade and investment) and Governance for Growth (including effective public services and fight against corruption).

The RCC is supported by the Secretary General, a Secretariat based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a Liaison Office in Brussels.<sup>37</sup>

One of the most famous tools of RCC is the **South East Europe Development Scoreboard** or SEEDS. It is the RCC's web-based platform showing how the region of South East Europe, and its individual economies, is faring in achieving the SEE 2020 Strategy targets and objectives. It consists of: SEE 2020 Progress Tracker, Balkan Opinion Barometer, and Balkan Business Barometer.

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.rcc.int/>

According to the Balkan Opinion Barometer for 2016 almost half of the people in SEE (46%) thinks of living abroad, whereas the highest percentage of people wanting to leave is in BiH 50%, while the lowest is in Croatia 36%. On the other hand intra-regional emigration is not so popular. When asked if they would consider emigrating to somewhere in the region the majority 78% of respondents answered that they would not.<sup>38</sup>

In the sphere of Facilitate free movement of experts, professionals and skilled labour the lead is taken by the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). In its Work programme for the CEFTA Chairmanship in 2016 by Montenegro, lack of the system of mutual recognition of qualifications was recognised as one of the main challenges to greater mobility of workers in the SEE region.

“Following the establishment of the Joint CEFTA – RCC- ERISSEE Working Group on Recognition of Professional Qualifications in 2015 , the main activities during Montenegrin Chairmanship will be oriented towards creating conditions for recognition of professional qualification and exploring potentials for conclusion of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs). Two important studies will be carried out in 2016: Identification of sectors and professions of mutual interest and Mapping of the existing legislative and institutional framework for recognition of professional qualifications.”<sup>39</sup>

### **Balkan Regional Platform for Youth Participation and Dialogue**

Balkan regional platform for youth participation<sup>40</sup> and dialogue aims on increasing awareness on youth participation, youth activism and the possibilities of young people creating and influencing the policies closely related to them. One of the goals of the Platform is to improve cooperation and the coordination between Civil Society (CS) and the public authorities with the active participation of youngsters, through the creation Regional Network for Local Democracy. Easing youth activism and participation and raising the awareness of local authorities, policy and decision makers, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and youth leaders in targeted countries on EU standards, policies and practices on youth participation is the main scope of every activity within the platform. Open dialogue between youth and stakeholders in their communities but also in Balkan region countries is the main objective and position of youth, which the creation of the platform seeks to achieve.

The creation of the platform through planned activities organised and implemented at grassroots, national and regional level, aims at favouring participation and social inclusion of youth, particularly underrepresented youth with fewer opportunities. Fundamental for this is the experience and expertise of ALDA and the Balkan LDAs with the ability to achieve capacity building and enhanced networking of the youth within the platform. Almost 20 years of experience of the partners in local democracy and open dialogues on European level was used

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.rcc.int/seeds/home>

<sup>39</sup> Work programme for the CEFTA Chairmanship in 2016

<sup>40</sup> Balkan regional platform for youth participation [www.aldabalkan-youth.eu](http://www.aldabalkan-youth.eu)

into designing this program tailored specifically as sprout of self-sustainable network with strong dissemination, all with the goal of achieving increment of youth participation with EU standards.

The activities of this Platform could be easily divided into three categories:

- Activities appointed towards enhancement the network;
- Regional activities and
- Local activities.

Starting with the activities which are constant and on-going, appointed towards the enhancement of the network, such as steering group meetings, foundation of specific teams, research and comparative analysis, capacity building trainings, and know-how transfer of positive practices, the platform grows base for further enlargement.

The Regional activities, common for all partners in the project aim at awareness raising and visibility as one of the objectives, are mainly focused on campaigning and informative actions. Study visits, newsletters on the activities, online campaigns, social media channels activities and roots for advocacy and lobbying on local level with authorities. The regional activities are as well with focus on exchange of good practices among region countries. The local activities, implemented in each participating community will be organized by LDAs and their associate public authorities annually, in order to keep their relevance for youth target groups and final beneficiaries. These activities have the goal to create the path for opening dialogues on local level through mutual organisation of the actions by local youth in coordination with the local authorities.

### **The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)**

The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is the means by which the EU supports reforms in the 'enlargement countries' with financial and technical help. The IPA funds build up the capacities of the countries throughout the accession process, resulting in progressive, positive developments in the region. For the period 2007-2013 IPA had a budget of some € 11.5 billion; its successor, IPA II, will build on the results already achieved by dedicating € 11.7 billion for the period 2014-2020. Current beneficiaries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.

A substantial contribution to increased regional mobility of young people within IPA countries has been achieved within its component II, the Cross-border Cooperation Programmes. CBC projects primarily aimed to encourage economic activities and cooperation between diverse stakeholders have significantly contributed to people-to-people exchange in priority areas such environment protection, rural development, tourism, culture, education, research and development. Potentiality of these Programmes to contribute effectively to increased youth mobility within the region, especially in areas of formal and non-formal education and



intercultural exchange should be further explored also from the point of their positive impact on strengthening the local ownership of the reform processes and the role of young people in opening up of a long-term perspective for societal change in the Western Balkan countries.

### The Council of Europe

One of the most active supra-national institutions contributing to and recognising the importance of mobility of young people in Europe, already for decades, is surely the Council of Europe.

One of the flagship initiatives is definitely the **Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card**. It was set up in 1991, following the Council of Europe Conference of ministers responsible for youth held in Lisbon. At this Conference, the ministers advocated to increase mobility of young people between the East and the West.

The overall objective of the Partial Agreement is for member governments and EYCA member organisations to work together to create better mobility solutions for young people. This general objective implies two main aims: Development of the Youth Card scheme and Development of better youth policies with and for member governments.

Anyone under the age of 30 can become a youth card-holder – a young person does not need to be a student or a resident of a European country. Youth cards provide access of young people – residents or travellers – to advice, discounts and benefits in the fields of mobility, accommodation, culture, language courses and services and products both on-line (by category, city or country) and off-line. Youth cards are issued by national youth card organisations.

Partial Agreement member states to date: Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Switzerland.<sup>41</sup>

Besides the Card the Council of Europe is recognised by its support through the European Youth Foundation. The Foundation offers four types of grants, which all include international dimension of youth work and/or mobilities, to different types of organisations:

- International activities (open to all except local NGOs)
- Annual work plans (only open to international NGOs/networks, can include pilot activities)
- Pilot activities (open to local, national, regional NGOs/networks)
- Structural grants (open to international and regional NGOs/networks)

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<sup>41</sup> [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Partners/2016\\_JAN\\_Partial\\_Agreement\\_Youth\\_Card\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Partners/2016_JAN_Partial_Agreement_Youth_Card_en.asp)

## The Partnership - The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership

The Partnership - The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership stems from the close relations that the Council of Europe and the European Commission have developed in the youth field over the years since 1998. The overall goal is to foster synergies between the youth-oriented activities of the two institutions. The specific themes are participation/citizenship, social inclusion, recognition and quality of youth work.<sup>42</sup>

## ERASMUS+

The EU itself has recognised young people, their mobility and non-formal education as one of its priorities. Since 1996 it is funding various activities in these fields through current Erasmus+, and through previous programmes, namely Youth for Europe, European Voluntary Service, YOUTH Programme, and the Youth in Action Programme.

In 2014 it has merged 7 previous programmes (The Lifelong Learning Programme; The Youth in Action Programme; The Erasmus Mundus Programme; Tempus; Alfa; Edulink; Programmes of cooperation with industrialised countries in the field of higher education) into one big common programme.

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Its budget of €14.7 billion will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train gain experience, and volunteers abroad.<sup>43</sup>

In this budget 10% is given to the youth section. In this area projects in the field of youth (youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service) and youth workers mobility are funded, as well as their dialogue with policy makers in the field of youth policy.

In 2016, only at the centralised level, coordinated by the EACEA, through the Western Balkan Window in the field of capacity building of youth, youth NGOs in the Western Balkans have received EUR 2.344.133,67.

In order to achieve its objectives, the Erasmus+ Programme implements the following Actions:

### *KEY ACTION 1 – mobility of individuals*

**Mobility of learners and staff:** opportunities for students, trainees, young people and volunteers, as well as for professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, staff of education institutions and civil society organisations to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country.

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<sup>42</sup> <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/home>

<sup>43</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en)

Countries of WB used mentioned programs in various extend. For example, one of the programs for mobility European Voluntary Service was used for more than 10 years by organisations from WB.

Number of EVS volunteers sent from the Western Balkans (June 2016):

RS	29
BA	25
AL	12
ME	3
XK	2
Total	73

Number of EVS volunteers hosted in the Western Balkans (June 2016):

BA	27
AL	24
RS	15
XK	3
ME	2
Total	71

**Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees:** high-level integrated international study programmes delivered by consortia of higher education institutions that award full degree scholarships to the best master students worldwide.

**Erasmus+ Master Loans:** higher education students from Programme Countries can apply for a loan backed up by the Programme to go abroad for a full Master Degree. Students should address themselves to national banks or student loan agencies participating in the scheme.

#### *KEY ACTION 2 – cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices*

**Transnational Strategic Partnerships** aimed to develop initiatives addressing one or more fields of education training and youth and promote innovation, exchange of experience and know-how between different types of organisations involved in education, training and youth or in other relevant fields. Certain mobility activities are supported in so far as they contribute to the objectives of the project;

**Knowledge Alliances** between higher education institutions and enterprises which aim to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, employability, knowledge exchange and/or multidisciplinary teaching and learning;

**Sector Skills Alliances** supporting the design and delivery of joint vocational training curricula, programmes and teaching and training methodologies, drawing on evidence of trends in a

specific economic sector and skills needed in order to perform in one or more professional fields;

**Capacity-building projects supporting cooperation with Partner Countries** in the fields of higher education and youth. Capacity-building projects aim to support organisations/institutions and systems in their modernisation and internationalisation process. Certain types of capacity-building projects support mobility activities in so far as they contribute to the objectives of the project;

**IT support platforms**, such as eTwinning, the School Education Gateway, the European Platform for Adult Learning (EPAL) and the European Youth Portal, offering virtual collaboration spaces, databases of opportunities, communities of practice and other online services for teachers, trainers and practitioners in the field of school and adult education as well as for young people, volunteers and youth workers across Europe and beyond.

### *KEY ACTION 3 – support for policy reform*

Knowledge in the fields of education, training and youth for evidence-based policy making and monitoring, in particular: a) country-specific and thematic analysis, including through cooperation with academic networks; b) peer learning and peer reviews through the Open Methods of Coordination in education, training and youth.

**Initiatives for policy innovation** to stimulate innovative policy development among stakeholders and to enable public authorities to test the effectiveness of innovative policies through field trials based on sound evaluation methodologies;

**Support to European policy tools** to facilitate transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications, as well as the transfer of credits, to foster quality assurance, support validation of non-formal and informal learning, skills management and guidance. This Action also includes the support to networks that facilitate cross-European exchanges, the learning and working mobility of citizens as well as the development of flexible learning pathways between different fields of education, training and youth;

**Cooperation with international organisations** with highly recognised expertise and analytical capacity (such as the OECD and the Council of Europe), to strengthen the impact and added value of policies in the fields of education, training and youth;

**Stakeholder dialogue**, policy and Programme promotion involving public authorities, providers and stakeholders in the fields of education, training and youth for raising awareness about the European policy agendas, in particular Europe 2020, Education and Training 2020, the European Youth Strategy, as well as the external dimension of European education, training and youth policies. These activities are essential to develop the capacity of stakeholders to actively support the implementation of policies by stimulating the exploitation of the Programme results and generating tangible impact.

## JEAN MONNET ACTIVITIES

The Jean Monnet Activities will support: Academic Modules, Chairs, Centres of Excellence, Policy debate with academic world, Support to associations; The Jean Monnet Activities also provide operating grants to designated institutions which pursue an aim of European interest and organises Studies and conferences with the purpose of providing policy-makers with new insights and concrete suggestions.

## SPORT

Actions in the field of sport will support: Collaborative Partnerships; Not-for-profit European sport events; and Strengthening of the evidence base for policy making through studies; data gathering, surveys; networks; conferences and seminars; Dialogue with relevant European stakeholders.<sup>44</sup>

## Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs - The European exchange programme for Entrepreneurs

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs helps provide aspiring European entrepreneurs with the skills necessary to start and/or successfully run a small business in Europe. New entrepreneurs gather and exchange knowledge and business ideas with an experienced entrepreneur, with whom they stay and collaborate for a period of 1 to 6 months. The stay is partly financed by the European Commission.

"Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs" is financed by the European Commission and operates across the Participating Countries with the help of the local contact points, competent in business support (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, start-up centres, incubators etc.). Their activities are coordinated at European level by the Support Office of the Programme.<sup>45</sup>

The European Commission's Mobility Scoreboard has been developed by Eurydice (higher education) and CEDEFOP (IVET). It follows up on the 2011 'Youth on the Move' Recommendation of the Council of the European Union, providing a framework for monitoring progress made by European countries in creating a positive environment supporting learner mobility. Indicators aim to help countries identify actions to remove obstacles to learner mobility.<sup>46</sup>

## Creative Europe

*Creative Europe*<sup>47</sup> is a programme of European Union. The Creative Europe programme aims to support the European audio-visual, cultural and creative sector. The different funding schemes

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<sup>44</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/introduction/how-to-read-programme-guide\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/introduction/how-to-read-programme-guide_en)

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/mobility-scoreboard>

<sup>47</sup> Creative Europe [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe_en)

encourage the audio-visual, cultural and creative players to operate across Europe, to reach new audiences and to develop the skills needed in the digital age. By helping European cultural and audio-visual works to reach audiences in other countries, the programme will also contribute to safeguarding cultural and linguistic diversity. Main programs are: culture, media and Cross-sectoral.

Culture supports:

- Cooperation projects
- Literary translation
- European platforms
- European networks

MEDIA supports:

- Access to markets
- Access to markets / Single actions
- Audience development
- Promotion of European audio-visual works online
- Support to Film education
- Co-production funds
- Development video games
- Development single projects + slate funding
- Distribution
- Distribution - automatic support
- Distribution - selective support
- Distribution - support to sales agents
- Film festivals
- Networking of cinemas
- Online distribution
- Training
- TV programming
- Media 2007-2013

Cross-sectoral support:

- Refugee Integration Projects.

## Europe for Citizens Programme

*Europe for Citizens*<sup>48</sup> is also programme of European Union. The aim of this programme is To contribute to citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity

- To foster European citizenship and to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at EU level

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<sup>48</sup>Europe for Citizens[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en)

- To raise awareness of remembrance, common history and values
- To encourage democratic participation of citizens at EU level, by developing citizens' understanding of the EU policy making-process and, by promoting opportunities for societal and intercultural engagement and volunteering at EU level

Priorities of the programme for 2016-2020 for European Remembrance (Strand 1) are: Commemorations of major historical turning points in recent European history; Civil society and civic participation under totalitarian regime; Ostracism and loss of citizenship under totalitarian regimes: drawing the lessons for today; Democratic transition and accession to the European Union.

Specific priorities for "Democratic engagement and civic participation" (Strand 2) are: Understanding and Debating Euro-scepticism; Solidarity in times of crisis; Combatting stigmatisation of "immigrants" and building counter narratives to foster intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding; Debate on the future of Europe.

This program also is approving Operating grants to 1)Organisations reflecting on causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history as well as on other defining moments and reference points in recent European history (Strand 1: European remembrance) and 2)Organisations working on citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU, ranging from local democracy to the empowerment of citizens to play a full part in EU policy (Strand 2: Democratic engagement and civic participation).

### **European Fund for the Balkans**

The European Fund for the Balkans is a joint initiative of European foundations that envisions, runs and supports initiatives aimed at strengthening democracy, fostering European integration and affirming the role of the Western Balkans in addressing Europe's emerging challenges. Programme strategy based on three overarching areas – Capacity Development, Policy Development and Regional Cooperation – is channelled via flagship programmes and selected projects, complemented with a set of actions arising from EFB's regional identity as a relevant player in its fields of focus.

Their synergetic effects are focussed on continuous "Europeanization" of the policies and practices of the Western Balkans countries on their way to EU accession, through merging of the region's social capacity building with policy platform development, and a culture of regional cooperation. The combined implementation of these programmes will contribute to democratic development of the Western Balkans countries on their way to EU accession and hence contribute to the fulfilment of the mission of the EFB. The fact that the Fund's target groups include stakeholders from all Western Balkans candidate and potential candidate countries, mainly in a mixed setting, means that the EFB programmes also contribute to the development

of cross-border, cross-ethnic and cross-religious relationships throughout the region. These relationships are an important asset for lasting peace and stability in the region<sup>49</sup>.

### Visegrad Scholarship Program

Visegrad scholarships program<sup>50</sup> support Masters and post-Masters (PhD/postdoc) studies/research stays at higher-education institutions in the V4 region, as well as in the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries. Eligible applicants for incoming scheme, among others are: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia. Applicants from these countries can apply for up to 4 semesters (MA level) or 2 semester (PhD/postdoc) at higher-education institutions in V4 countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.

Special Scholarship Program managed in cooperation with the Open Society Archivum Budapest offers research fellowships at the Open Society Archives (OSA) at the Central European University in Budapest. Altogether, 12 fellowships are awarded annually to selected applicants from V4 countries and 3 fellowships annually to nonV4 applicants.

The fellowships are given on a competitive basis to scholars, artists or journalists who wish to conduct research at OSA, and whose current research projects are relevant to the holdings and the given research priorities of the fund and OSA. The EUR2,000 fellowship is designed to provide access to the archives, cover travel to/from Budapest, modest subsistence, and accommodation for a research period of two months. Scholarships for shorter periods are prorated. The fellows take part in OSA's research activities, attend in-house seminars, and, if possible, cooperation with other fellows (where possible). The intention is to build long-lasting working relationships, and involve former fellows in OSA's research programs.

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<sup>49</sup>The European Fund for the Balkans, <http://balkanfund.org/>

<sup>50</sup>Visegrad scholarships program <http://visegradfund.org/scholarships/visegrad-scholarships-at-osa/>



### 3. FIELD RESEARCH: Voice of youth and stakeholders

Feld research has an aim to hear the voices of young people, and practitioners that are working directly with young people, as well as other relevant stakeholders. Filed research was done through focus groups and questionnaire that young people filled offline and online. In total **1520 young people gave their opinion via questioner and 117 young people via focus groups – in total 1637 (one thousand six hundred thirty seven) young people!**

Focus groups were organized for the population of vulnerable youth groups from the areas targeted by the Local Democracy Agencies: young people from rural areas, marginalized youth, the unemployed, young people with low education, young people who are not involved in non-formal education and youth with low economic status.

Beside mentioned, interviews were made with **17 representatives** of relevant regional/country based stakeholders.

COUNTRY	SURVEY	FOCUS GROUP (NUMBER)	INTERVIEWS: (NUMBER)	INTERVIEWS ( STAKEHOLDERS )
MONTENEGRO	163	11	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directorate for youth and sport in Ministry of education;</li> <li>• Association for Democratic Prosperity -Zid;</li> <li>• UNDP Montenegro (UN Joint youth empowerment programme)</li> </ul>
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	390	45	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Administration - Office of Youth Department of Prijedor;</li> <li>• Ministry of Youth, Sports and family in Republic of Srpska;</li> <li>• Representatives of cantonal authorities,</li> <li>• Senior Associate for Youth within the Ministry of science, culture and sport of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton in Federation of BiH in charge of employment, vocational education and training, and volunteering of young people</li> </ul>
KOSOVO*	215	7	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Youth in Action Council, Peja</li> <li>• Humanitarian Law Center Pristina</li> <li>• Directorate of Culture, Youth and Sports of Peja/Pec</li> </ul>
FYR MACEDONIA	263	27	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Youth Council of Macedonia [NYCM],</li> <li>• Volunteers Centre Skopje</li> </ul>
SERBIA	475	27	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth worker and trainer</li> <li>• Coordinator for European Voluntary Service under Erasmus + programme of EU</li> </ul>

- |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS)</li> <li>• National Association on Youth Workers, Serbia</li> </ul> |
|--|--|--|--|--|

Main comments about existing strategies/action plans supporting youth mobility in the fields of education, higher education, volunteering, internships and professional development, and employability of young people are that the budgets for this priority in the National Youth Strategies, or other relevant policy documents are usually insufficient to cover projects and programs of actual youth mobility, rather than just informing young people about mobility possibilities financed by other donors (EU, the Council of Europe (CoE) etc.).

When considering using of international possibilities, there is present low level of accessible information. This means that programs are presented usually through websites, or online publications that are not easy to find if you don't know where to look for it. Websites of the institutions often are not youth friendly. Also, there are not enough materials available for young people with seeing/reading difficulties.

If we consider international projects, mainly EU or CoE funded have long procedures, and it is an issue for young people that usually get used to short term planning, and are discouraged when they hear that they have to wait so long from the moment of application until project start.

Financial support for long-term, continuous programs for youth education or any other mobility are lacking from the state and from the other donors.

The most important comments can be found in the conclusions and recommendation section of the document.

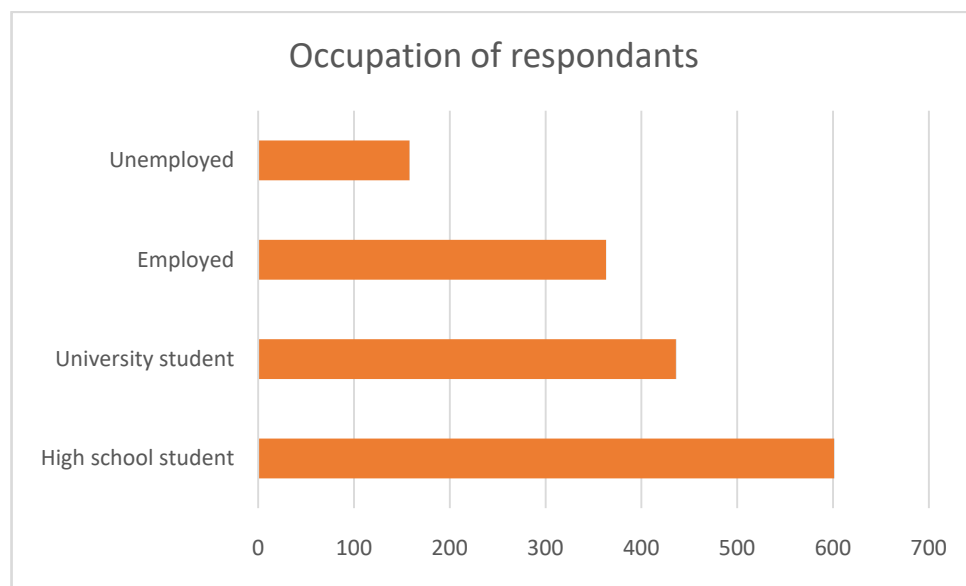
The biggest number of young people answered to the questions from the survey. This questionnaire was available online, but also was distributed in youth clubs, schools, coffee bars and other places where young people meet. Overview of their answers is interesting and can be material for not just this research but also material for further analysis when mobility of youth is under question.

### Profile of respondents of the survey

All one-thousand-five-hundred and twenty (1 520) respondents to the questionnaire were young people from 15 to 30 years old. Almost half of them (48.3%) are youngsters age of 15 to 19 that in region of Western Balkan is the age of the high school students, with exception of 19 years old who normally at that age finished high school and are already at the first year of university, or at the stage of their entry job, or being registered as unemployed.

This information is important because as a result of this part of the research we have the opinion of the really young people who are in the process of education and planning of their professions.

Almost one third of respondents (29.6%) are young people 20 to 25 years old and belong to the group of young adults, while a bit more ten one fifth (22.2%) are young people from 26 to 30 years old and those who typically are considered to be in their prime working years. The concrete structure of our respondents can be seen in chart below.



*Chart: Occupation of respondents to online survey*

Most of the respondents (67%) are still in educational system as high school students (39%) or university students (28%).

Twenty-three percent are employed, while the smallest percent of respondents belong to the group of unemployed youth (10%)

Almost sixty percent (59.4%) of respondents are female, which could mean that they are slightly a bit more in favour of voluntarily taking part in researches or being interested in this specific topic.

If we take into account **geographical coverage** of this segment of the research, as it was mentioned above, young people from five countries were involved: 1 520 youngsters from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo\*, FYR Macedonia and Serbia.

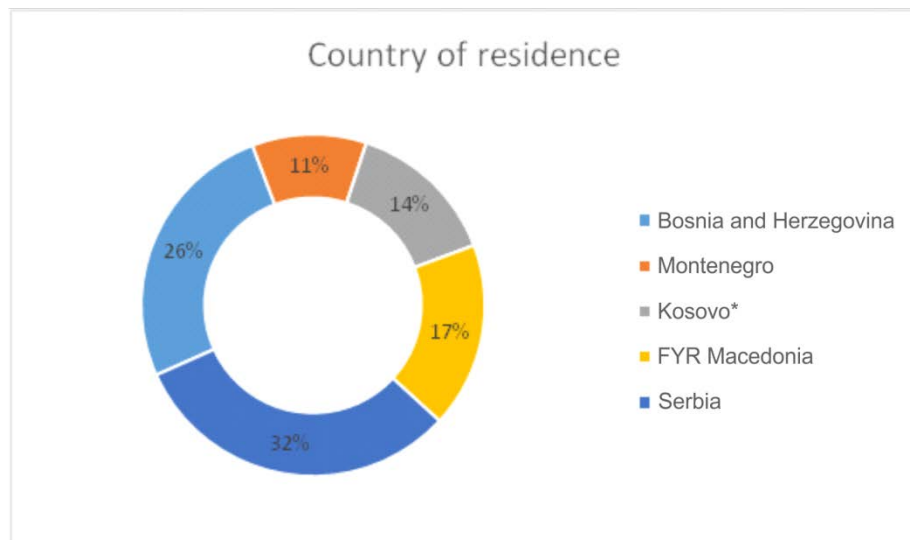


Chart: Country of residence

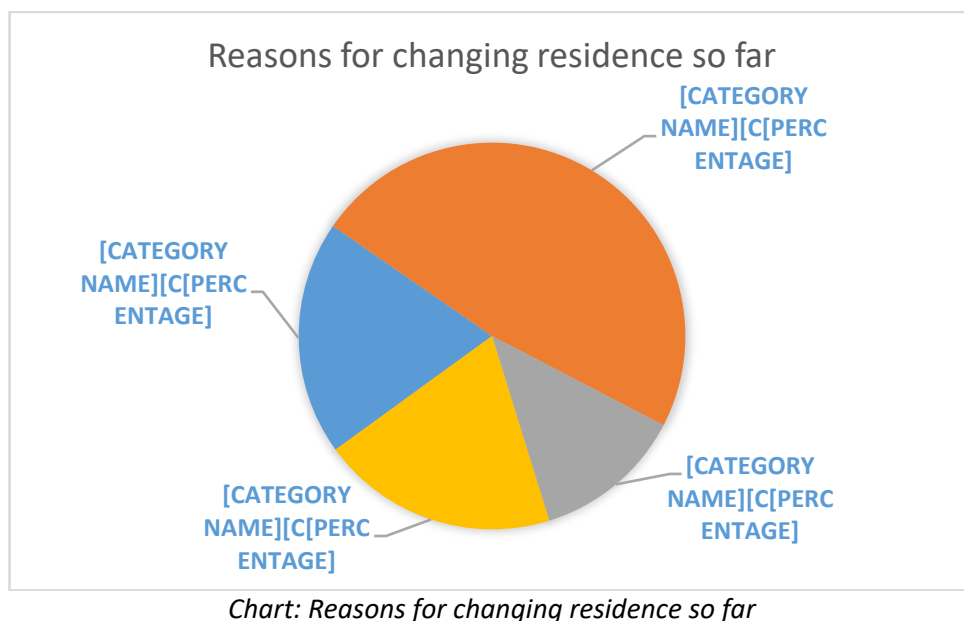
If we take into consideration country of residence, one third of young people covered by the research is from Serbia (32%), followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (26%), The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (17%), Kosovo\* (14%) and Montenegro (11%).

Most of the respondents, concretely 80% of them are coming from urban areas of smaller municipalities across the region.

## Trends

Out of total number of young people included in this part of the research forty-one percent (41%) has been changing their place of residence previously, and reasons for that are mainly educational. Namely, 68% of youngster has moved to other city in order to enrol to secondary school or university.

Working mobility - finding job in another place was the reason for 12% of youngsters to move.



Among 19% of those who stated that they moved from other reasons, most of them mentioned “family reasons” and that their parents decided, “the war”, intention of getting autonomy - “to become more independent” or “for better conditions, because I lived in the countryside” or general “for a better life”.

### “Languages for growth and jobs”<sup>51</sup>

Foreign languages are essential to ensure that European citizens can move, work, and learn freely throughout Europe. It is also considered that learning a foreign language is essential to ensure that language is not a barrier to participation in society.

EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 emphasizes that young people who learn foreign languages can study or train abroad, and also have better intercultural communication skills. Study on the impact of the European Union's Erasmus student exchange programme<sup>52</sup> shows that graduates with international experience fare much better on the job market.

The European Commission is working with national governments to meet an ambitious goal: enabling citizens to communicate in 2 languages other than their mother tongue. This “Barcelona objective”<sup>53</sup> was agreed in 2002 by the EU's heads of state and government and in that year - 2002, the European Council recommended that at least two foreign languages should be taught to all pupils from a very early age. Following that, in September 2008, the European

<sup>51</sup> European Commission: EDUCATION AND TRAINING website: <http://bit.ly/2khY3im>

<sup>52</sup> Study on the impact of the European Union's Erasmus student exchange programme. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2hcZgQ0>

<sup>53</sup> Barcelona Objectives. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jZ1Lih>

Commission adopted a Communication titled 'Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment'<sup>54</sup> (COM (2008) 566 final). Priorities include:

- helping EU countries develop new educational tools to ensure that school-leavers have better language skills;
- gathering data to monitor progress in language teaching and learning - to encourage mastery of more than one language as a way of improving job prospects and enabling people to move around within the EU;
- rewarding innovation in the language teaching and learning.

This was followed in November 2008 by a Council Resolution on a European strategy for multilingualism<sup>55</sup> (2008/C 320/01). These addressed languages in the wider context of social cohesion and prosperity and focused on actions to encourage and assist citizens in acquiring language skills. The Resolution invited the EU Member States and the European Commission to:

- promote multilingualism with a view to strengthening social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and European construction;
- strengthen lifelong language learning;
- promote (better) multilingualism as a factor in the European economy's competitiveness and people's mobility and employability;
- promote linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue by increasing assistance for translation, in order to encourage the circulation of works and the dissemination of ideas and knowledge in Europe and across the world.

The European Commission works with UNESCO and the OECD to collect and analyse data on language teaching across Europe<sup>56</sup>.

In our research, when asked about mother tongue young people answered following: Bosnian 11%, Serbian 50%, Croatian 2%, Montenegrin 7%, Macedonian 16% and Albanian 14%.

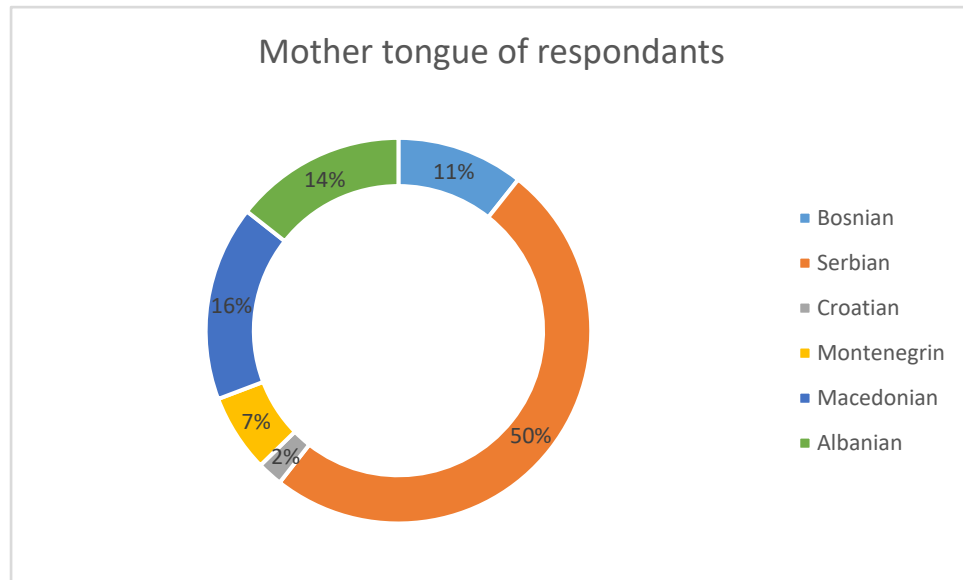
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<sup>54</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2kWyD1>

<sup>55</sup> COUCIL OF THE EU: Council Resolution on a European strategy for multilingualism. Available at:

<http://bit.ly/2ksXYdN>

<sup>56</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Foreign\\_language\\_learning\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Foreign_language_learning_statistics)

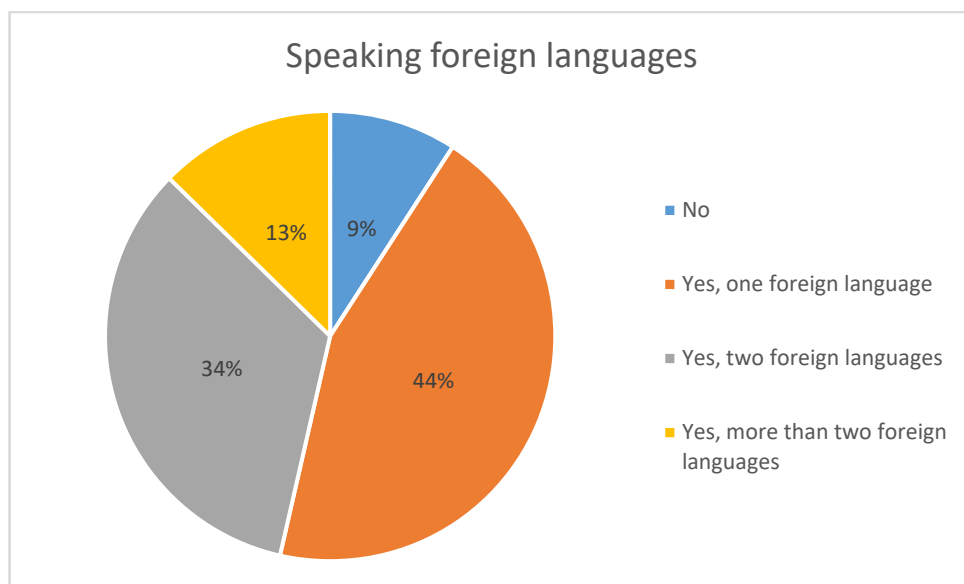


*Chart: Mother tongue of respondents*

Speaking foreign languages is very important for young people if they want to be included into learning or working mobility programs at international level, but not only because of that. Having job in the country of residence often includes communication with people whose mother tongue is not the same like language of the majority living there, or the mother tongue of the young person itself. Nowadays, working in business sector very often demands communication with foreigners that could be part of the company's team or group of clients, not to mention working in other sectors like tourism, culture or similar.

Besides mentioned, several studies indicate that individuals who learn a second language are more creative and better at solving complex problems than those who do not. (Bamford&Mizokawa, 1991) and that the language learners show greater cognitive flexibility, better problem solving and higher order thinking skills. (Hakuta 1986)

In countries covered by this research, according to the results of the survey, 91% of young people declared that they speak foreign language/es, out of which 44% stated that they speak one foreign language, 34% two foreign languages and 13% more than two foreign languages. (Please check the chart below)



*Chart: Speaking foreign languages*

For comparison we can see that just over half (51.2 %) of upper secondary general education students (at ISCED level 3 general) in the EU-28 studied two or more languages in 2014. Luxembourg stood out as the EU Member State with the highest proportion (100 %) of upper secondary general education students learning two or more languages, although shares of 98.6 % or higher were recorded in Finland, Romania, Slovakia and France. By far the lowest shares of secondary education students learning two or more languages, all below 10 %, were recorded in Portugal, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Greece.<sup>57</sup>

The majority of young people covered by this research declare that they know English language (96%), which is expected since this is the compulsory language in most of the schools in Western Balkans. The second most spoken language is German, with 24%. Those are followed with Spanish and Italian that are spoken by 10.7% and 10.4% of young people. French language is spoken only by 9.6% and Russian by 5.9% of respondents<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> Eurostat [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Foreign\\_language\\_learning\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Foreign_language_learning_statistics)

<sup>58</sup> Note: some of respondents speak more 2 or 3 languages, so the sum of these percentages does not give 100



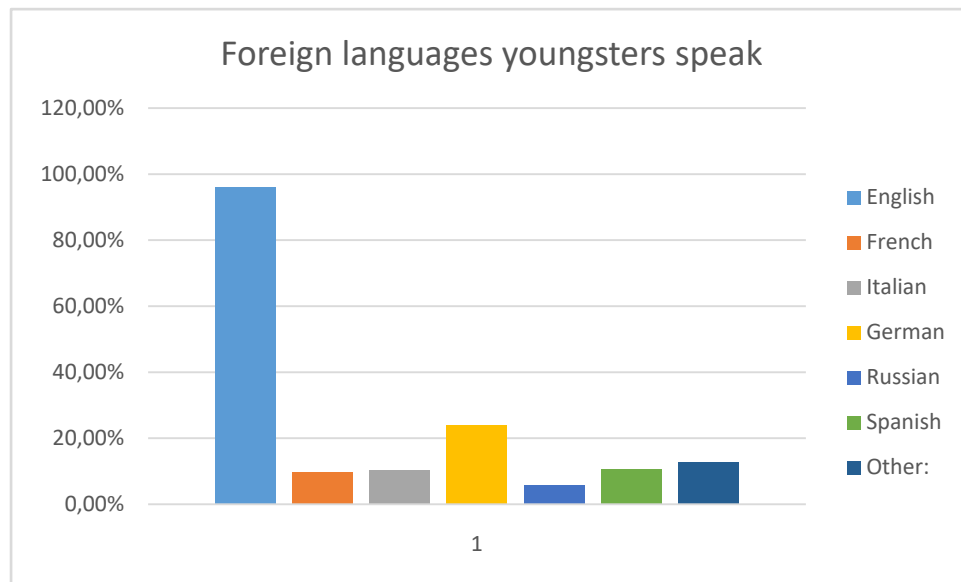


Chart: Foreign languages youngsters speak

Among other languages that are spoken among young people are: Hungarian, Bulgarian, Turkish, and Norwegian.

If we compare this data with statistics from EU, we can see that the level of knowing English is bigger in WB, since some 94.1 % of all EU-28 students were studying English as a foreign language in 2014. Less than one quarter (23.0 %) were studying French and less than one fifth were studying Spanish (19.1 %) which is bigger compared with percent in WB for both languages. For German it looks like it is more known by young people in WB (24%) then studied in EU countries (18.9 %).

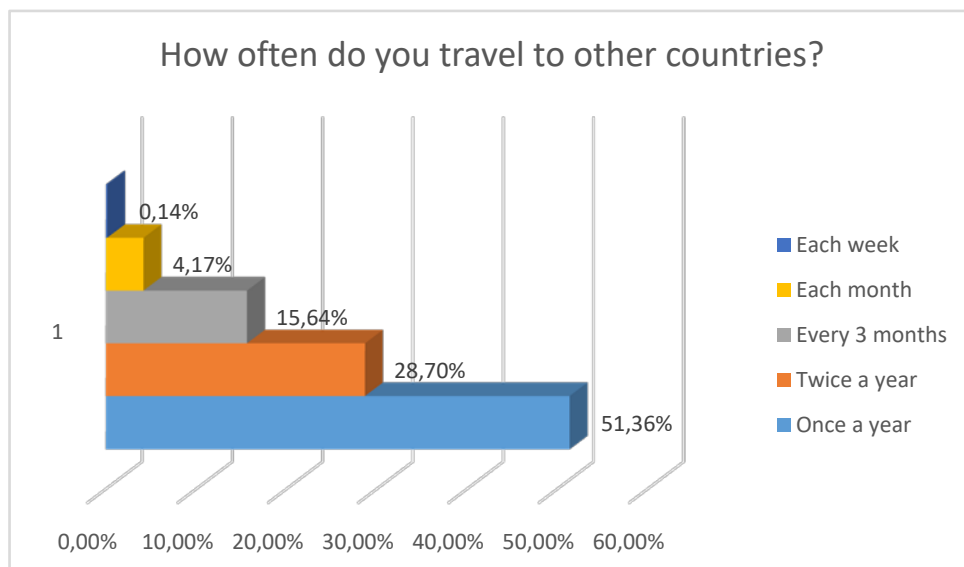
## Youth travel

Youth Travel is defined as independent trips of less than one year by people aged 15–30.<sup>59</sup> Unlike typical vacations, youth travel is motivated by several factors, including the desire to experience other cultures, build unique life experience, and benefit from formal and informal learning opportunities from other countries, including education or work abroad.

Youth travel is also known as a combination of youth, student and educational travel market.

In the countries covered by the research, around half of the young people are traveling to another country once per year, while almost one third travel twice per year. Small percent, around 16%, travel every three months, and only 4% each month. (*Details in the chart below*).

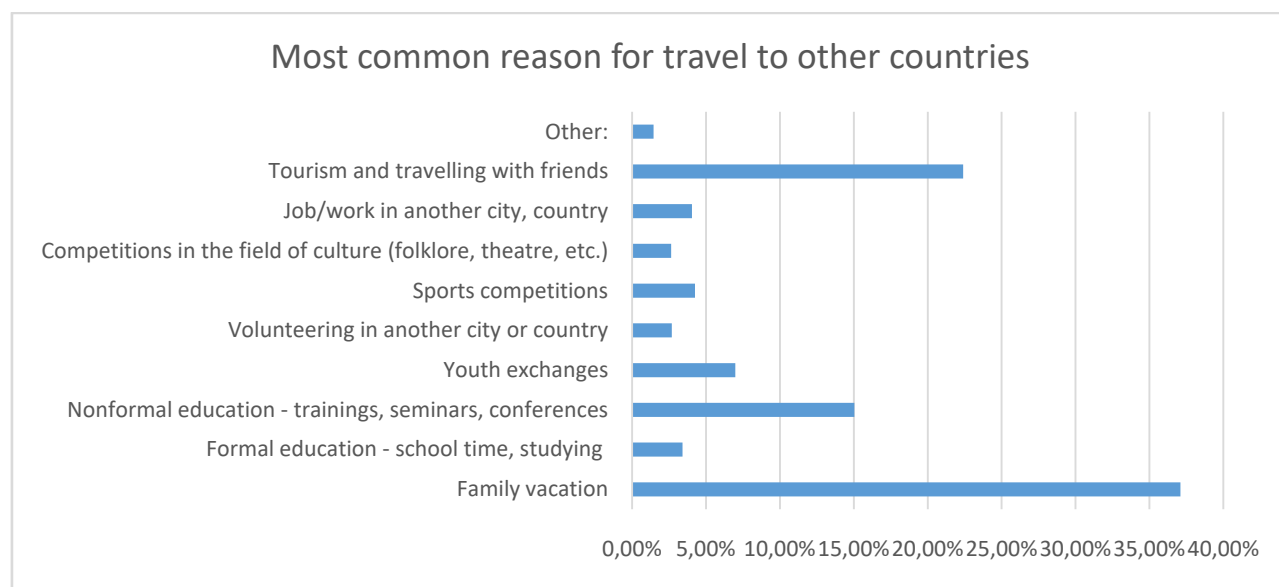
<sup>59</sup>"Market Overview and Trends|StudentMarketing".[www.student-market.com](http://www.student-market.com) Retrieved 2015-12-16.



*Chart: Frequency of traveling to other countries*

Traveling frequency of youngsters from WB is in line with worldwide trends, if we compare to e.g. research made by *Topdeck Travel* (popular provider of group travel for 18-30 something), who surveyed 31,000 people from 134 different countries and got a result that 88 percent of them travelled overseas between one and three times a year.

Reasons for traveling of youth from WB are diverse, but almost 60% of them stated that they travel for to other countries tourism - for family holidays (37%), or travelling with friends (22.4%).



*Chart: Most common reason for travel to other countries*

Second biggest reason for traveling to other countries is travel for **non-formal education purposes** – attending seminars, training, conferences etc. (15% of youth). Around 7% of youth goes to international youth exchanges.

If we consider the work related mobility, it is the reason for travel for only 4% of the young people.

It is important to note that social, cultural and economic value of youth, student and educational travel is increasingly recognised by employers, educational institutions, official tourism organisations and governments worldwide<sup>60</sup> and thus should be supported by the WB governments as well.

If they don't travel – for the young people main reason is lack of funds/money, but also some of them lack of time, don't have information about the traveling opportunities for youth, or just say that they don't have a need for travel. In addition, some youngsters don't travel because of the family (*I take care for the elderly or children, so I cannot travel; they'd miss me if I travelled more; they would opposed to frequent travels*).

### Virtual or Online mobility

Nowadays, new technologies make possible learning and working without being physically present in the same space where the teacher, trainer, employer or other team members are.

According to the e-learningeuropa.info portal, virtual mobility means: “The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to obtain the same benefits as one would have with physical mobility but without the need to travel<sup>61</sup>.”

This gives to young people opportunity to learn, discuss and collaborate with others from a distance. As such virtual or online mobility can offer a valuable alternative for those young people who do not have the opportunity to participate in study, training, exchange programmes or work for social, financial, or other reasons (e.g. as it allows them to take part in courses at other universities without having to leave their home university, or to be employed by company from other country).

If we have in mind Higher Education Institutions, it can be defined as: „a form of learning which consists of virtual components through an ICT supported learning environment that includes cross-border collaboration with people from different backgrounds and cultures working and

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<sup>60</sup> The power of youth travel, published by UNWTO and WYSE Travel Confederation Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jZ8bOk>

<sup>61</sup> [http://elearningeuropa.info/index.php?page=doc&doc\\_id=5906&doclng=6&m](http://elearningeuropa.info/index.php?page=doc&doc_id=5906&doclng=6&m)

studying together, having, as its main purpose, the enhancement of intercultural understanding and the exchange of knowledge<sup>62</sup>.

Virtual mobility has a great potential to contribute to the internationalization of higher education, enabling international cooperation opportunities through the use of information and communication technologies.<sup>63</sup>

Many universities and other education and training providers are offering online courses, with or without certification. The biggest database with lot of free courses is available at Coursera<sup>64</sup>.

Interesting example of usage of virtual concept is **The Republic of Estonia** that is the first country to offer **e-Residency** — a transnational digital identity available to anyone in the world interested in administering a location-independent business online. E-Residency offers to every world citizen a government-issued digital identity and the opportunity to run a trusted company online, unleashing the world's entrepreneurial potential.

This means that one can establish an Estonian company online and administer the company from anywhere in the world; digitally sign documents and contracts and conduct e-banking (but you first have to open bank account in Estonia), access online payment service providers and declare Estonian taxes online. By offering e-Residents the same services, Estonia is proudly pioneering the idea of a country without borders.<sup>65</sup>

Note that e-Residency does not confer citizenship, tax residency, residence or right of entry to Estonia or to the European Union, and is not a physical identification or a travel document.

Results from the research show that young people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia mostly (71% of them) do not use the available opportunities for online learning or being employed. Among this group, fifteen percent know someone who uses online courses or has been employed online. There is a group of young people presented as 5% of respondents that did not know that there are such possibilities.

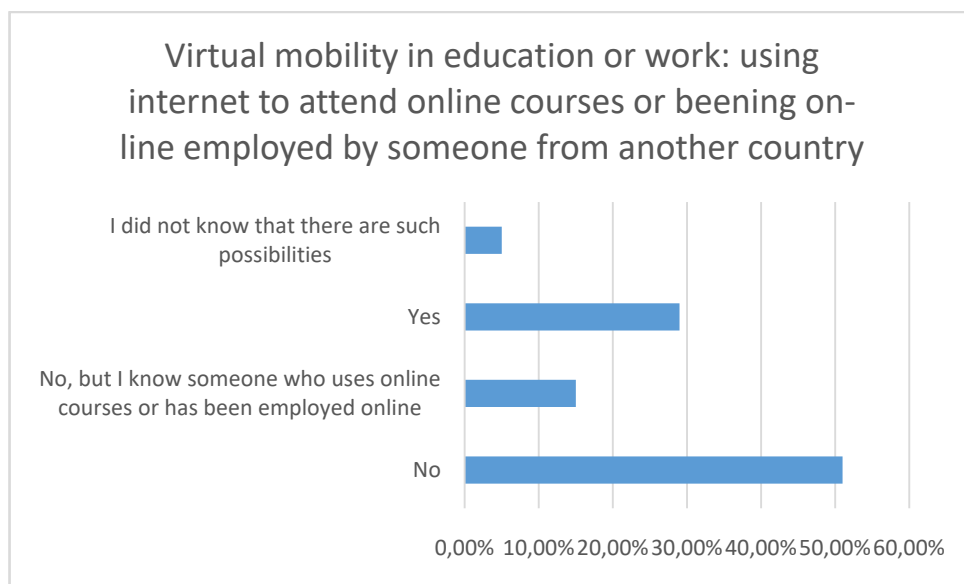
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<sup>62</sup>European Cooperation in Education through Virtual Mobility. A best-practice manual. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jG3cP8>

<sup>63</sup> VIRTUAL MOBILITY: AN ALTERNATIVE OR COMPLEMENT TO PHYSICAL MOBILITY? Ilse Op de Beeck, Wim Van Petegem. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jzF9GD>

<sup>64</sup> Coursera [www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org)

<sup>65</sup> Estonian e-Residency <https://e-estonia.com/e-residents/about/>



*Chart: Virtual mobility in education or work*

These results are an evidence that there is a space for development in the area of information of youth about virtual mobility in area of education and work, especially knowing that there are lot of online opportunities in the area of formal and non-formal education.

Internet offers users greater opportunities and resources for promoting their careers, work, education and social status (DiMaggio et al., 2004; Hargittai&Hinnant, 2008; Kim & Kim, 2001; Mossberger et al., 2003; Van Dijk, 2005; Zillien&Hargittai, 2009) and enhancing income and social mobility, which correlate positively with individual well-being. The appropriate use of internet in areas such as online news, online forums, online counselling, etc. can help to promote self-sufficiency, psychological empowerment, lifelong learning, and a higher quality of life (Fowler, Gentry, &Reisenwitz, 2015; Hu & Leung, 2003; Leung, 2010).<sup>66</sup>

### Local reality check: quality of life of young people

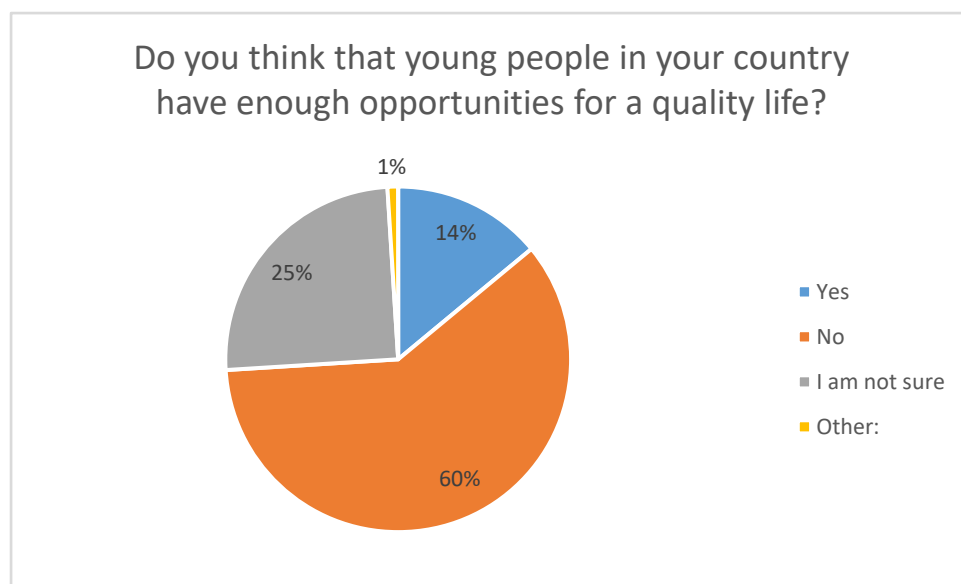
Measuring the quality of life and overall life satisfaction is a widespread practice in Europe, and in EU are monitored trough Eurostat quality of life framework. Subjective well-being encompasses three distinct but complementary sub-dimensions: life satisfaction, based on an overall cognitive assessment; affects, or the presence of positive feelings and absence of negative feelings; and the feeling that one's life has a meaning, as recommended by the *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being*<sup>67</sup>. In Europe, the effect of age on life satisfaction

<sup>66</sup> Life satisfaction in the internet age - Changes in the past decade. S.Lissitsa, S. Chachashvili-Bolotin. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jA6OHs>

<sup>67</sup> OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jGq4OB>

is small but statistically significant and younger people tend to report higher levels of life satisfaction<sup>68</sup>

Majority of respondents in our research think that young people in their country do not have enough opportunities for a quality life (60% of them). One quarter is not sure while fourteen percent think that they have enough opportunities for a quality life.



*Chart: Opportunities for quality life in country of residence*

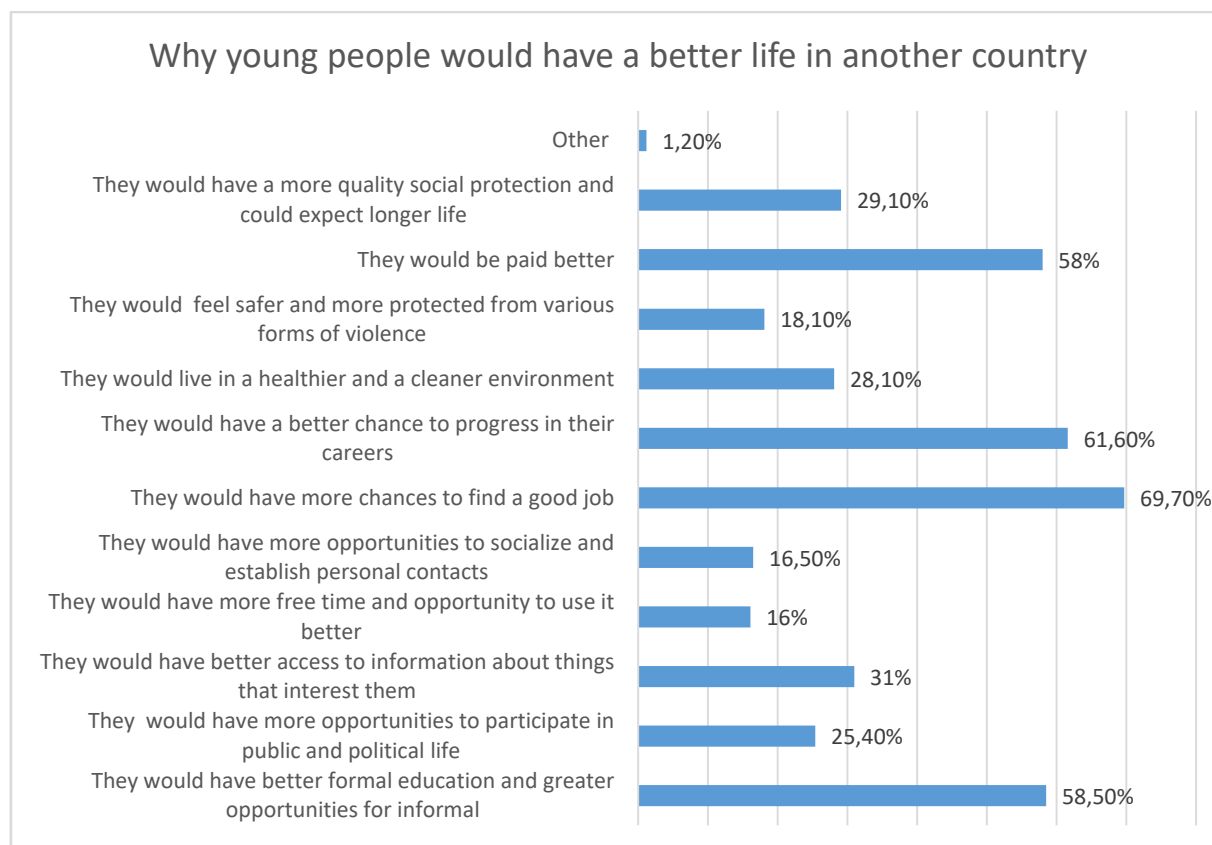
If we take into consideration opinion on fact if the young people in their local community (town, village) have enough opportunities for a quality life, the relationship between the percentages is similar but a bit higher in negative opinion so 64% thinks it is not, while 15% thinks that YES.

In general, majority of young people (76%) think that young people could have better life in some other country, while only 5% of think that young people in their country have the same life conditions as in other countries. Seventeen percent stated that they cannot tell.

Majority thinks that in the other country young people would have: more chances to find a good job (70% of respondents) and to progress in their careers (62%) of respondents.

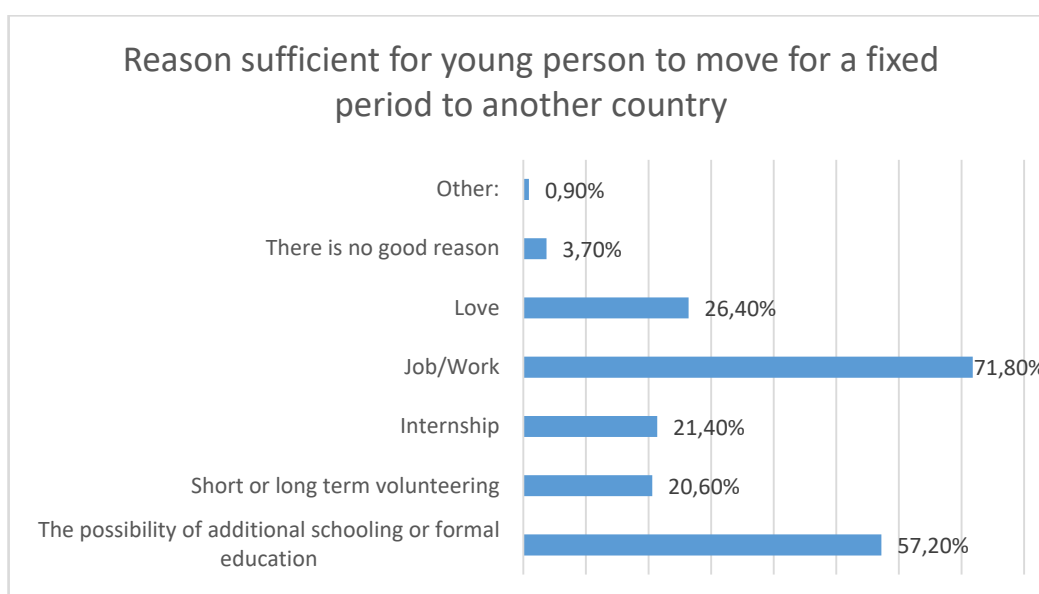
Considering the education sphere, 59% of respondents think that they would have better formal education and greater opportunities for informal education in another country and that they would have a better access to information about things that interest them.

<sup>68</sup>Eurostat. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1Cz63Sa>



*Chart: Why young people would have a better life in another country*

If they need to choose one reason for which that would have been sufficient for them to move **for a fixed period to another country**, 72% stated that it would be job/work. As it can be seen from the chart below, they could choose among: possibility of additional schooling or formal education short or long-term volunteering, internship, job/work and love.



*Chart: Reason sufficient for young person to move for a fixed period to another country*

Such a high rate of young people who would move because of job is clear evidence that participation in the economic life of young people is the most important for them. This is in line with data from the countries of EU, and Eurostat gives information that there is a clear relationship between labour status and life satisfaction, with the lowest level of overall life satisfaction in EU was reported by the unemployed. As expected, life satisfaction also is clearly associated with level of income (low-high)<sup>69</sup>.

The possibility of additional schooling or formal education could be a reason for 57% of young people to move for a fixed (limited) period to another country.

Education is seen as value in itself, but mostly as precondition to get better paid jobs. Some researchers concluded that life satisfaction is higher in countries where people spend on average more years in education, but there is a strongly present opinion that in Western Balkan education is used as “buffering system” meaning to keep young people busy with learning as long as possible since, anyway, there are no jobs on the market for them.

If we are talking about **permanent movement** to other country 17.4% of young people would never permanently move to another city of country. Out of total number, 55.5% would move to some of the EU countries, while in for a better quality of life 37% are willing to permanently move to another continent (Australia, America)

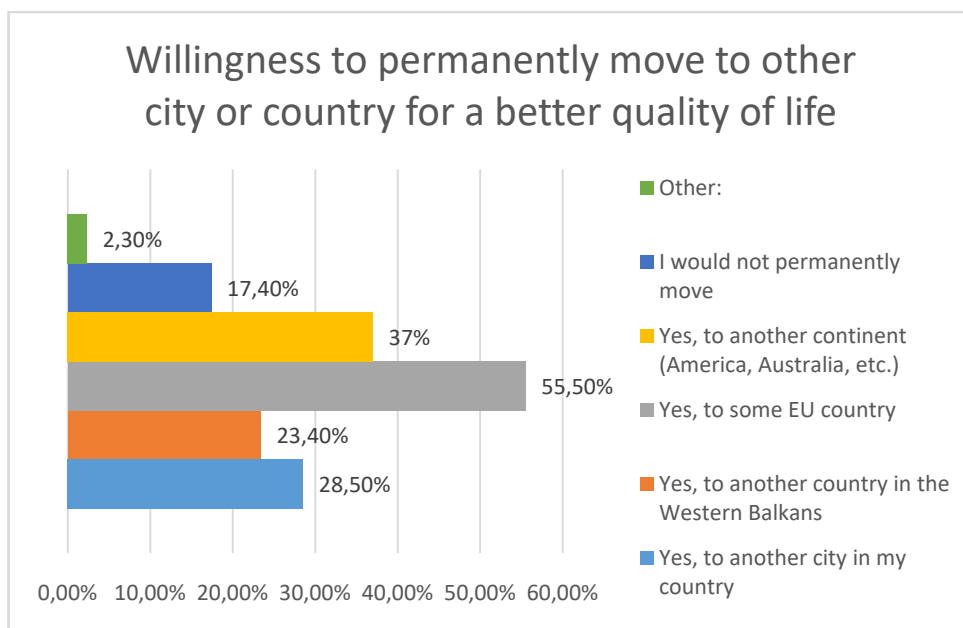
Willingness for regional mobility in the sense of permanent movement to other country from the region exists among close to one quarter of respondents (23.4%).

Internal (national) mobility is more interesting option, and almost one third of young people (28.5%) would move to another city in their country.

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<sup>69</sup>Eurostat. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1Cz63Sa>

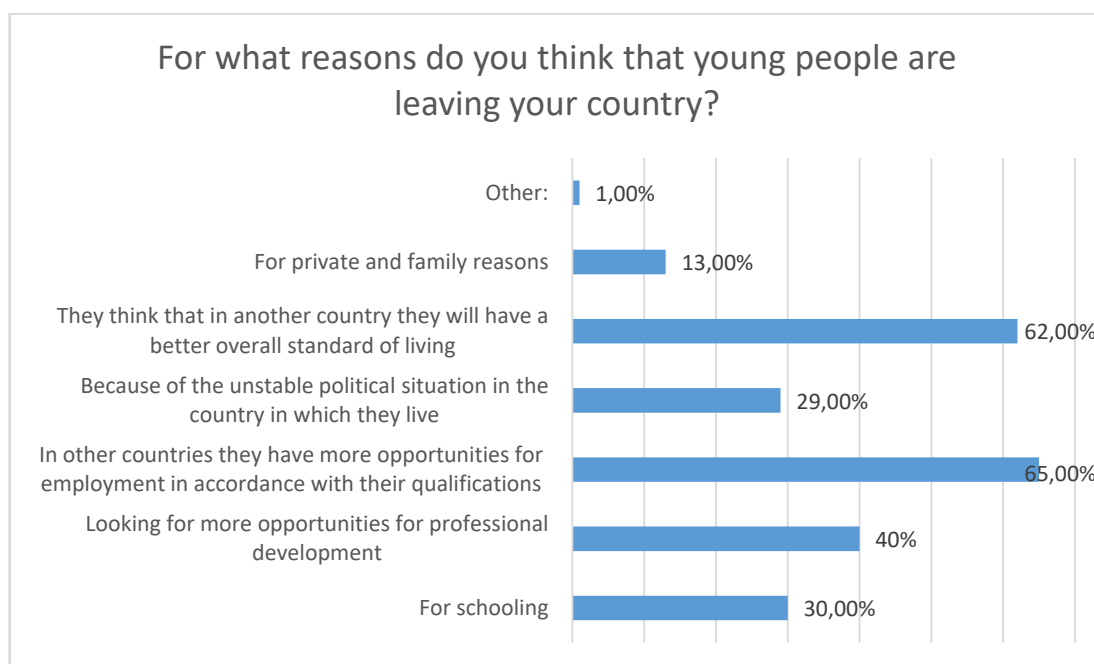




*Chart: Willingness to permanently move to other city or country for a better quality of life*

When judging the behaviour of their peers that moved from the country, they are confirming economic reasons and think that in other countries young people have more opportunities for employment in accordance with their qualifications and that in another country they will have a better overall standard of living.

It should be mentioned that one **third of respondents think that youngsters left the country because of the unstable political situation** in the country in which they live.

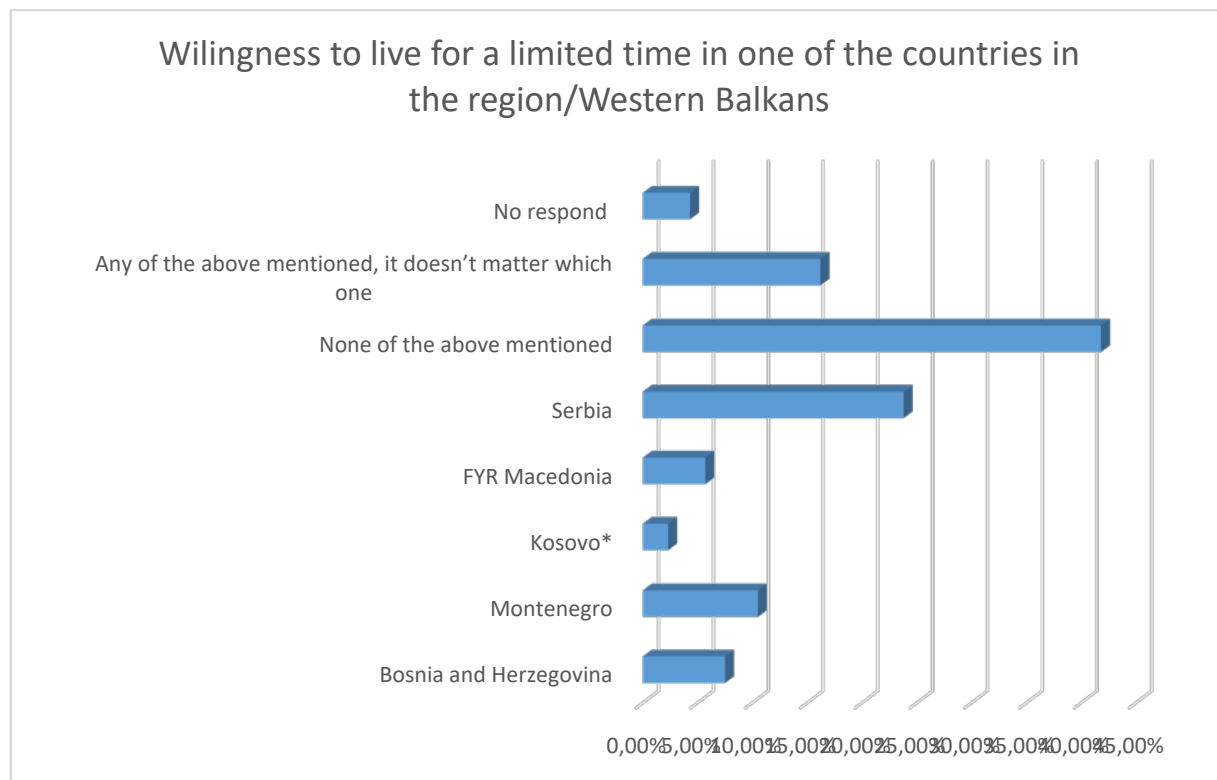


*Chart: For what reasons do you think that young people are leaving your country?*

According to results of this research, if young people would have the possibility to live for a limited time in one of the European countries, for the purposes of education, further training or employment, majority of them would you live in: Germany, Sweden, Austria or France. These are followed by Italy, Norway, and Switzerland etc.

If we research the **perception of other countries in the region** concerning quality of life and possibilities for young people, we can see that around one third of respondents think that it is the same like in their country (32%), around one third (33.4%) think that it is better than in their country and 29% cannot assess. One small percent, 3.7% think that the life in other countries in the region is worse than in their country.

If they would have the possibility to live for a limited time in one of the countries in the region/Western Balkans, for the purposes of education, further training or employment almost forty percent (41.8%) would not move even for a limited time to none of the countries in the region.



*Chart: Willingness to live for a limited time in one of the countries in the region/Western Balkans*

We see that 15% of young people would move for a limited time to any of the above mentioned, it doesn't matter which one. If they have to choose, the most popular according to this research is Serbia (23.8% of respondents). Far behind is Montenegro with 10.5%, Bosnia and Herzegovina with 7.5%, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 5.7% and Kosovo\* 2.3% (they could choose more than one country).

The situation in relation to working cross-border mobility is hard to assess due to lack of structured data on migration, but the share of foreign workers in the individual SEE countries is in general very low; for instance, it accounts for only 0.4% of total employment in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and for 0.1% in Serbia. Montenegro is however an exception with the share for foreign workers accounting for almost 8% in 2013. e.g. Regional labour migrants tend to be young. Regional migrants are generally lower skilled than workers from outside. Montenegro attracts the major part of regional migrants, while Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are the biggest sending countries.<sup>70</sup>

### What is the biggest obstacle for the mobility of young people in the Balkans?

According to results of this research, the biggest obstacle for the mobility of young people in the Balkans is economic in nature, and 36% of youngsters stated that it is the **lack of finances**.

Youngsters recognize that governments could make positive influence on this and 14% of them think that the biggest obstacle is lack of programs supported by the government to support the mobility of young people.

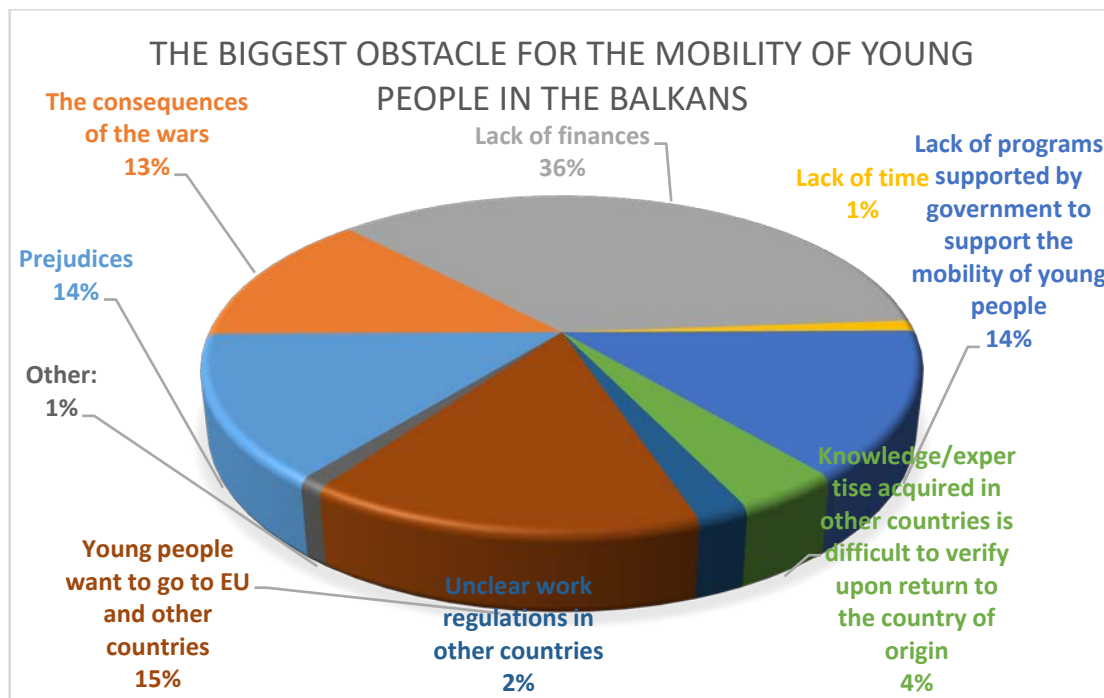


Chart: The biggest obstacle for the mobility of young people in the Balkans

When thinking about planning the future actions, it is important to pay attention to the opinion of almost one third of the young people who took part in this research (27% to be exact), that one of the biggest obstacles for the mobility of young people in Balkan are **prejudices**, and the **consequences of the wars**.

<sup>70</sup> SEE 2020 Strategy Study on Labour Mobility, 2015. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2jZw2e8>

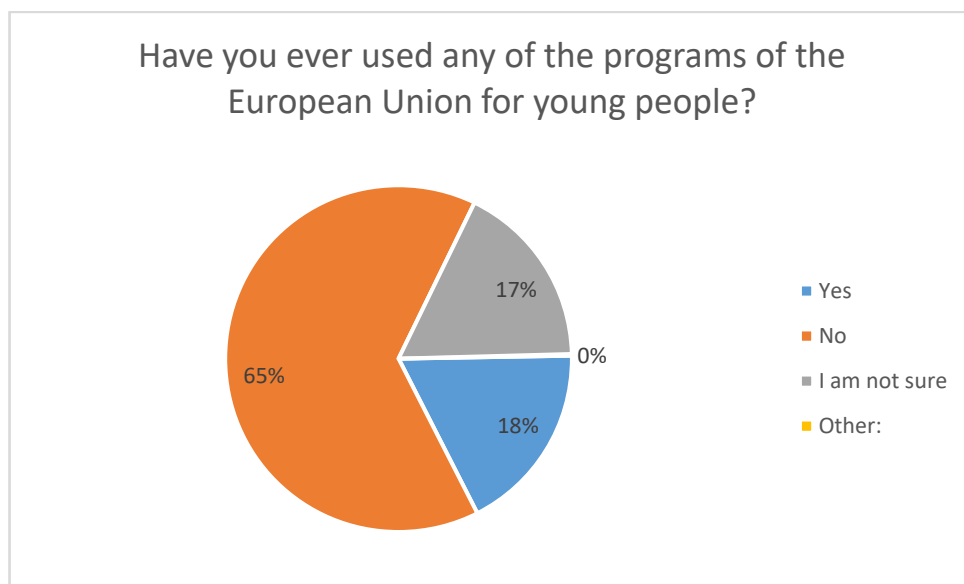
Young people recognised these issues as more relevant than the fact that *knowledge/expertise acquired in other countries is difficult to verify upon return to the country of origin*, or that there is *unclear work regulations in other countries in placed*. This is contrary to focus that regional governments recognised and are putting on in their strategic plans, like SEE 2020 strategy or similar documents. This fact is to be taken into consideration when planning future activities with the aim of increasing regional mobility, because neglecting existence of prejudices, and trying to pretend that the war in the region never happened will not contribute to reconciliation, trust building, neither to bigger mobility and cooperation in the region. Populist and hate speech present in media and promoted by specific political fractions is not helping to this process.

### Knowledge on mobility programmes by local /national government

Most of young people (76%) stated that there are no any programmes of local and national governments that support the mobility of young people. Those who declared that they exist, when asked to name those programs mostly mentioned scholarships for secondary or tertiary education, financial assistance for travel to a sports or folklore competitions abroad. Beside that segment, youngsters were mentioning other programmes managed by civil society organisations, international organisations, European Commission etc. or they sad that “*must be something, some kind of programme there, but I do not know what*”.

However, knowing about the programmes or not, **91% of young people never used mobility programmes of local/national governments.**

On the other hand, **18% of young people used some of the programmes of the European Union for young people**, which is double comparing to 9% of youngsters that used mobility programmes of local/national governments.



*Chart: Usage of the programmes of the European Union for young people*

Yet, it is to be noticed that the majority of young people – 65% never used any EU programmes for youth, and this can be result of several causes:

- there not enough programmes that youth from WB can use;
- there are programmes existing but civil society organisations and institutions that could apply and use them – are not doing that in big manner, or they are not successful in application process;
- there are lot of opened opportunities but youngsters are not informed;
- youngsters have information but they cannot take part due to social, economic, health or other reasons.

Significant number of them have been used by the young people from WB is Youth in Action – Erasmus+. Activities that young people took part are mainly youth exchanges, seminars, trainings, but also European Voluntary Service.

Besides Erasmus+, young people used for mobility European Youth Foundation funded projects, Cross Border Cooperation Programme of Franco-German Youth Office, CEEPUS, Daad, Zoran Djindjic Foundation, RIVERSEE program, Pestalozzi Children's Foundation etc.

Besides mentioned, 17.4 % of youngsters stated that they are not sure was the program that they took part an EU program or not.

### **Voice of youth: What kind of programmes to support youth mobility we would like to have**

Young people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, FYR Macedonia and Serbia would like to have accessible programs that would support mobility on national, regional and international level.

Their wish list is long, but mostly mentioned are:

- Regional Voluntary Service – structured like European Voluntary Service but to function at the regional level;
- Support programmes to education and vocational training;
- More non-formal education programmes in the country and the greater possibility of going abroad for further training;
- More opportunities for professional training and practice in the country and abroad;
- Programmes that connect young professionals dedicated to exchange of experience, networking and acquisition of new knowledge in the individual vocational fields.
- The programme and actions for students to be able to visit other countries in the region or country of the EU;
- Programmes for co-financing of travel costs in international youth exchanges;
- Advanced training with job opportunities;
- Programmes to exchange experiences, programmes of formal and informal education.

- Student exchanges and university education opportunities at regional level
- More exchanges of young people in the Balkans, greater synergy in the academic, sports and other activities;
- Programmes focussed on active citizenship, democratic governance, human rights.

Many of them say that they would like to have any kind of program since there are no opportunities for youth in their local communities: "any kind, just fairly provided to those who are really interested."

Important remark is that programmes need to be accessible to all young people, not only young people with political and other "connections".





## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

All the countries included in the sample have similar legal and institutional framework for youth policy implementation including youth mobility. Overview of youth policy structures in countries can be seen in the table below.

	BiH/ FBiH	BiH/ RS	BiH/ Brčko	Kosovo*	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia
Ministry with Youth in its title	X	X		X	X		X
National Council for Youth	X	X		X		X <sup>71</sup>	X
Law on Youth	X	X		X		X	X
Strategy for Youth		X		X	X	X	X
Action Plan for Youth		X		X	X	X	X
National Youth Council	X			X	X		X
Local Structures and Action Plans	X	X			X	X	X

Countries in the region are putting lot of efforts into regional and EU – WB networking in the sphere of formal education, especially tertiary education, and promotion of best use of the EU programs for funding research and innovation.

Some of the countries in the region also are **signing bilateral agreements of cooperation**. For example, Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia in January 2017 signed an the Agreement on Cooperation, which forms the legal framework of cooperation between the two governments in the field of education. The agreement e.g. defined encouraging cooperation between educational institutions, student and teacher mobility, exchange of experience in reforming the education system and other forms of joint activities.

However, these measures are mainly for the young people, students or professional who are highly educated, but there is an evident lack of opportunities for vulnerable youth groups.

<sup>71</sup> Not operational at the moment because of need for new election of the members in accordance with recently adopted Youth Law

Most of possibilities for education, training and employment are centralized in capitals or cities that are university centres in the countries.

The characteristic of labour market in all countries is structural unemployment, i.e. structural mismatch of supply and demand, high share of women in unemployment and high share of youth among the unemployed. In addition to that, there is a significant number of those waiting for employment for over a year (long-term unemployment). It is noticeable that cross-border areas and small cities show significantly higher unemployment rates than the national average, which is also one of the reasons why economic development of cross-border region is lagging behind.

Nonetheless, the situation in the education system is such that the enrolment policy is not quite consistent to the labour market demand and we have a huge percent of highly educated young people that present large share of potential labour force but is suffering because of the demand/supply mismatch on the labour market.



Formal education system in all countries involved in the research continues to generate a number of occupations which used to be demanded in the past, but that don't fit the work force demand at present, and are not developing new curricula promptly enough that will be followed by education for new professions that are modern at the moment, and more in demand in the labour market.



Some other challenges identified as essential for youth mobility are poor economic situation coupled with high unemployment, but not because of lack of adequate qualifications, but much more because of limited scope of employment opportunities in the country.

Even when employed, young people have low wages (in business sector because they are at the entry level and without experience they cannot have high salary; and in public sector because in that sector wages are anyway low).

Regional mobility should be supported with infrastructure, and it is to be mentioned that it is partly inadequate because of poor roads on certain borders (such as between Montenegro and Bosnia), and also not frequent traffic lines during the year among certain countries – only during holiday season.

Also, for young persons without external support and help it is rather complicated to know procedures for obtaining work permits even in their own country, not to mention other countries.

Yet, it is important to pay attention on the opinion of the almost one third of the young people that took part in this research that one of the biggest obstacles for the mobility of young people in the Balkans are prejudices, and the consequences of the wars, and youngsters perceive these issues as more relevant than the fact that knowledge/expertise acquired in other countries is difficult to verify upon return to the country of origin, or that there is unclear work regulations in other countries in place. Although the language in previously conducted research was not recognised as a significant obstacle to regional mobility, it is recognised by this research that youngsters who are speaking Albanian as mother tongue, or even Macedonian (which is similar to Bosnian/Montenegrin/Serbian/Croatian) has less chances to get well - paid jobs in certain areas and vice versa. If we are talking about tourism, then English, German, Russian languages are an asset.

In the area of employment, according to the SEE 2020 Strategy Study on Labour Mobility (October 2015) **conditions for intra-regional mobility exist** due to differences in employment and unemployment rates and in wages, **but** the crisis has taken its toll on the labour market and **probably led to increased out-of regional migration rather than mobility within the region.**

At the moment, flows follow ethnic lines and inherited routes, e.g. between Montenegro and Serbia, Montenegro and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and between Bosnia and Herzegovina and both Croatia and Serbia. An increased mobility between Kosovo\* and Albania is to be expected<sup>72</sup>.

Recommendation that young people and other stakeholders involved in field research gave are similar in all the countries. It is to be noted that the mostly heard comments and recommendations were not always directly connected with the mobility, but with:

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<sup>72</sup> BALKAN BAROMETER 2015 Public Opinion Survey, RCC SEE. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2lfbXBO>

- status of youth in general, especially question of human rights and discrimination (according to age, gender, political opinion etc.),
- recognition of knowledge and skills gained during volunteering and non-formal education;
- need for better policy framework for voluntarism and creation of supporting environment for its development,
- developing framework for development of youth work,
- higher level of structural support for involving youth in decision making,
- recognising the value of contribution of young people as individuals and as part of civil society in development of the region.



Most common recommendations of young people and other stakeholders included in this research are:

- To recognize youth as a valuable part of the society;
- Local, regional, and in national level of government need to invest more in the development of human potential;
- To improve policy framework in the area of mobility;
- To invest in national and regional programs supporting mobility;
- To make information on regional and international mobility opportunities more accessible to youth;
- To recognize importance of youth sector working on non-formal education, mobility and employability of youth, and providing jobs for youth - and invest in it;
- To reform the education system so as to enable young people to gain more practical skills;
- To adapt the education system better to labour market in order to create jobs where gained knowledge and skills can be applied;
- To support professional mobility within the country through some incentives, for example to get a flat for moving to a remote place for job;
- To improve the quality of higher education;
- To better define criteria for state scholarships and also make them more inclusive (to be applicable to more and diverse young people);

- A larger number of young people to be given the opportunity to work in local and national government bodies, to bring freshness and could sustain a quality programs and encourage youth mobility and the "awakening" in the social and business sense;
- All stakeholders to insists on ethical approach and education on responsible and plan-goal oriented internships; and create better system of support, supervision and monitoring of such programmes and legal entities which deliver internships;
- To implement organized, transparent, programmed and responsible financial scheme/policy/strategy for mobility on local and national levels;
- To change existing and developed new functional Law on voluntarism that will protect youth rights;
- To allocated resources for implementation of existing and developed new strategies for volunteer experience recognition and quality standards in consultative process;
- To define effective protection measures for young people in volunteering and stop misusing volunteers as replacement for paid workers working 8 hours per day;
- To fight corruption in labour market, and create more jobs for young people;
- To provide useful opportunities to young people of our countries to meet and cooperate;

**!AND TO MAKE THIS CHANGE HAPPEN NOW!**

**!YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT WANT TO BE THE FUTURE, THEY WANT TO BE THE PRESENT OF SOCIETY!**

#### **Balkan Regional Platform for Youth Participation and Dialogue**

The European Association for Local Democracy – ALDA with its Balkan Network of Local Democracy Agencies has launched a large scale co-operation programme: Towards the culture of regional dialogue and youth participation in the Balkans. This partnership strategy aims to strengthen the capacities of local CSOs and youth groups for creating a regional co-operation platform promoting active citizenship, participation and democratic governance principles. Balkan Network for Local Democracy aims to improve awareness of public authorities and policy/decision makers in the Western Balkan countries on social, educational and economic needs of youth, thus paving the way towards their more effective contribution to public policy-making and enhanced transparency of the reform process on the way to EU integration. Our extensive educational and research work, local information, public consultation and advocacy campaigns organized across the region in 2016., have resulted with the following:

#### **Recommendations for youth regional advocacy actions:**

Western Balkan societies share both the common legacy of the recent past and even more the common EU integration perspective. The present social and economic reform agenda as well as the commitment to accession negotiation process clearly show their common aspiration towards the full membership in the EU. However, the young generation living under prolonged

transformation of societies, caught between the past and the future, between backward looking and forward looking perspectives is facing numerous obstacles, both administrative and mental barriers. Leaving the Balkans has become the only future alternative for many as the recent surveys show, while over the past couple of years all the countries in the region are facing a historic level of the brain-drain – of young educated people. The Balkan countries have not yet been able to adequately address such an emigration and depopulation, while the institutional incentives to encourage young people to stay and contribute to social and economic development in their countries or local communities are still sporadic. In this sense, a wide range of regional co-operation initiatives by the countries themselves (and not only supported externally) have become crucial requiring immediate and effective measures to ensure preconditions for increased youth mobility and thus help further educational, employment and cultural co-operation opportunities in the Balkans. Therefore the members of the Balkan Regional Platform for Youth Participation and Dialogue adopt the following policy recommendations for policy and decision makers:

- ✚ The research results show that there is an evident need for increasing the number of regional co-operation programmes financed by the national/regional and local governments in support to initiatives to enhance , educational, labour market (and apprenticeship), cultural and tourist youth mobility;
- ✚ It is necessary to create conditions for and/or enforcement of the regulations public transportation vehicles for youth with disability that would increase availability of educational, cultural, labour and tourist mobility;
- ✚ To further develop and effectively translate into practice the local, national regional strategic plans on ways of intensifying exchanges aimed at the increased mobility of pupils, students and youth outside of the formal education system and NEET youth;
- ✚ To establish adequate and sustainable funding instruments by the governments for the provision of scholarships for regional youth exchanges in area of culture, education, work and tourism;
- ✚ To improve the normative and strategic framework in line with SEE2020 recommendations and to overcome the obstacles in youth employment in other countries in the region, that are related to different national legislations regulating employment, labour and migrations in general;
- ✚ To develop projects in support to overcoming the obstacles in cross-border employment opportunities for youth and establishment of youth friendly mobility support services – centres, that would provide information for youngsters that want to enrich their

professional experience with usage of international and regional mobility schemes – for internships or jobs.

- ✚ To call for the national governments to create more conducive environment for youth employment and apprenticeship opportunities in the region. Understanding of concept and preparation for being fully functional in the area of common EU labour market has to go in line with understanding and creating of the common Balkan labour market.
- ✚ To help stimulate synergies between formal and non-formal education and in this way maximize the benefits for youth regional co-operation and mobility processes.
- ✚ Enhance capacity building of the youth sector in order to improve the knowledge, information and competences needed to enhance youth mobility and the exchanges across the region.
- ✚ To encourage more innovative policy framework for virtual/online mobility (educational - formal and non-formal education; for apprenticeship and labour force mobility) and improving the system for recognition of the skills and knowledge gained in this way. Also, establishing or improving regulations that will enable working practice and financial management of online programmes and projects relevant for young people, including start-ups, entrepreneurial skills development and similar initiatives. The appropriate use of internet in areas such as online news, online forums, online counselling, etc. could help promote self-reliance, psychological empowerment, lifelong learning and a better quality of life of young generation across the region.



## RESOURCES

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### List of web resources:

Description/Title	link
The Council of Europe	<a href="http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/CoE_and_young_people_en.asp">http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/CoE_and_young_people_en.asp</a>
The Partnership	<a href="http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/home">http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/home</a>
About Erasmus+ Programme	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en">http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en</a>
EACEA – mobility scoreboard	<a href="https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/mobility-scoreboard">https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/mobility-scoreboard</a>
Mapping mobility – pathways, institutions and structural effects of youth mobility in Europe	<a href="http://move-project.eu/">http://move-project.eu/</a>
Youth Mobility	<a href="http://www.ymobility.eu/">http://www.ymobility.eu/</a>
youthpolicy.org	<a href="http://www.youthpolicy.org/">http://www.youthpolicy.org/</a>
EURES	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/eures-services">https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/eures-services</a>
Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs	<a href="http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/">http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/</a>
European Parliamentary Research Service Blog	<a href="https://epthinktank.eu/2014/01/28/youth-employment-mobility-of-young-workers/">https://epthinktank.eu/2014/01/28/youth-employment-mobility-of-young-workers/</a>
SEE 2020 Strategy	<a href="http://www.rcc.int/files/user/docs/reports/SEE2020-Strategy.pdf">http://www.rcc.int/files/user/docs/reports/SEE2020-Strategy.pdf</a>
Regional Cooperation Council	<a href="http://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-opinion-barometer">http://www.rcc.int/seeds/results/2/balkan-opinion-barometer</a>
EU - WB education platform	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/international-cooperation/western-balkans_en">http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/international-cooperation/western-balkans_en</a>
Game ECOSOC.. how to convince the decision makers that you have a good idea:	<a href="http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.r-eu-ready">http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.r-eu-ready</a>
Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations	<a href="http://www.alliance-network.eu">www.alliance-network.eu</a>
Service Civil International (SCI)	<a href="http://www.sci.ngo">www.sci.ngo</a>
Creative Europe	<a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe_en">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe_en</a>
Europe for Citizens	<a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en</a>
Visegrad scholarships program	<a href="http://visegradfund.org/scholarships/visegrad-scholarships-at-osa/">http://visegradfund.org/scholarships/visegrad-scholarships-at-osa/</a>

The European Fund for the Balkans	<a href="http://balkanfund.org/">http://balkanfund.org/</a>
The World Summit Youth Award (WSYA)	<a href="http://www.youthaward.org/news/balkans-beyond-borders-youth-mobility-new-media-creativity-and-power-film-mutual-understanding">http://www.youthaward.org/news/balkans-beyond-borders-youth-mobility-new-media-creativity-and-power-film-mutual-understanding</a>
Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)	<a href="https://rycowesternbalkans.org">https://rycowesternbalkans.org</a> <a href="http://www.roadtoryco.com">www.roadtoryco.com</a>
Center for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, Bosnia and Herzegovina	<a href="http://cip.gov.ba/index.php/bs/legislativa">http://cip.gov.ba/index.php/bs/legislativa</a>
Study on Youth in the Federation in 2013	<a href="http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/sarajevo/11436.pdf">http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/sarajevo/11436.pdf</a>
The Institute for Youth Development KULT	<a href="http://www.mladi.org/">http://www.mladi.org/</a>
The Ministry Civil Affairs of BiH	<a href="http://www.mladi.gov.ba">www.mladi.gov.ba</a>
Commission for Coordination of Youth Issues in BiH	<a href="http://www.mladi.gov.ba">www.mladi.gov.ba</a>
Labour and Employment Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina	<a href="http://www.arz.gov.ba/Aktuelnosti/default.aspx?id=2052&amp;langTag=bs-BA">http://www.arz.gov.ba/Aktuelnosti/default.aspx?id=2052&amp;langTag=bs-BA</a>
Kosovo	<a href="http://www.mkrs-ks.org/?page=2,44">http://www.mkrs-ks.org/?page=2,44</a>
Kosovo Agency of Statistics	<a href="http://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics">http://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics</a>
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo	<a href="http://masht.rks-gov.net/en">http://masht.rks-gov.net/en</a>
Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Kosovo	<a href="http://www.mkrs-ks.org/?page=2,44">http://www.mkrs-ks.org/?page=2,44</a>
Kosovar Youth Council	<a href="http://www.kyc-ks.org/publications.php">http://www.kyc-ks.org/publications.php</a>
Macedonian Informative Agency	<a href="http://www.mia.mk/en/Inside/RenderSingleNews/61/133013589">http://www.mia.mk/en/Inside/RenderSingleNews/61/133013589</a>
National Youth Council of Macedonia	<a href="http://www.nms.org.mk/en/about-nycm/what-is-nmsm/">http://www.nms.org.mk/en/about-nycm/what-is-nmsm/</a>
Civic engagement in Macedonia (2012-2016)	<a href="http://www.graganskoucestvo.mk/">http://www.graganskoucestvo.mk/</a>
National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility in FYRo Macedonia	<a href="http://www.na.org.mk/index.php/en/en-national-agency.html">http://www.na.org.mk/index.php/en/en-national-agency.html</a>
Republic of Macedonia, the Ministry of education and science, scholarships abroad	<a href="http://stipendii.mon.gov.mk/web/guest/drugii-nstitucii-nadvorm">http://stipendii.mon.gov.mk/web/guest/drugii-nstitucii-nadvorm</a>
Youth Law (Official Gazette of Montenegro, no.42/2016)	<a href="http://bit.ly/2l99Jam">http://bit.ly/2l99Jam</a>
NPAM - National Action Plan for Youth in Montenegro.	<a href="http://bit.ly/2jFttBZ">http://bit.ly/2jFttBZ</a>



Youth Strategy (2017-2021).	<a href="http://bit.ly/2kzXiDa">http://bit.ly/2kzXiDa</a>
Strategy for informing the public about the EU and Montenegro's preparations for membership (Strategijainformisanjajavnosti o pristupanjuCrne Gore Evropskojuniji 2014 – 2018).	<a href="http://bit.ly/2iRAfVs">http://bit.ly/2iRAfVs</a>
Study on mobility programs, Ministry of culture of Montenegro	Available at: <a href="http://bit.ly/2iS0Ykz">http://bit.ly/2iS0Ykz</a>
National Erasmus+ Office (NEO)	<a href="http://www.neomontenegro.ac.me">www.neomontenegro.ac.me</a>
Ministry of culture of Montenegro	<a href="http://www.mku.gov.me/en/ministry">http://www.mku.gov.me/en/ministry</a>
Ministry of science of Montenegro	<a href="http://www.mna.gov.me">www.mna.gov.me</a>
Montenegrin “Scientific research network”	<a href="https://naucnamreza.me/en">https://naucnamreza.me/en</a>
Montenegrin Statistical Office’s (MONSTAT) “Population projections of Montenegro by 2060 with a structural analysis of the population of Montenegro	<a href="http://bit.ly/2ky0366">http://bit.ly/2ky0366</a>
Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sports of AP Vojvodina / Action Plan for Youth	<a href="http://www.sio.vojvodina.gov.rs/index.php/omladina/akcioni-plan-politike-za-mlade">http://www.sio.vojvodina.gov.rs/index.php/omladina/akcioni-plan-politike-za-mlade</a>
Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia	home: <a href="http://www.mos.gov.rs/">http://www.mos.gov.rs/</a> Young People Rule: <a href="http://www.mos.gov.rs/mladisuzakon/">http://www.mos.gov.rs/mladisuzakon/</a>
KOMS – National Youth Umbrella Association of Serbia	<a href="http://www.koms.rs">www.koms.rs</a>
NAPOR – National Association of Youth Workers of Serbia	<a href="http://www.napor.net">www.napor.net</a>
The Tempus Foundation - National Agency for Erasmus+ in Serbia	<a href="http://erasmusplus.rs/foundation-tempus/">http://erasmusplus.rs/foundation-tempus/</a>
Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia	<a href="http://www.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/Default.aspx">http://www.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/Default.aspx</a>



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