

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX

MONITORING REPORT OF POLITICAL,
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION
OF YOUTH 2021



Funded by
the European Union

SERBIA, NORTH MACEDONIA, ALBANIA, MONTENEGRO, TURKEY

Impressum

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX DEVELOPED BY:

Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation (Serbia)
Partners Albania for Change and Development (Albania)
Youth Alliance Krusevo (North Macedonia)
NGO Prima (Montenegro)
Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)
www.ybhwbt.eu

PUBLISHER:

Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation
Ilije Garasanina 53/a, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia
www.divac.com

ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLISHER:

Ana Koeshall, Ana and Divac Foundation

EDITOR:

Srđan Mitrović

LEADING RESEARCHERS:

Ksenija Čović and Aleksandra Đurović

RESEARCHER TEAM:

Era Sherifaj, Biljana Stojceska, Prof. Marija Topuzovska Latkovikj, Biljana Dukovska, Aleksandra Gligorović, Katarina Vukadinović, Burcu Oy and Çiğdem Güler.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Jonida Alite, Aida Perović, Anelija Mitrova and Didem Unsur

DESIGN BY:

Block & Roll, Serbia

PROOFREAD BY:

Queen Victoria Education & Translations

This publication was funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



Funded by
the European Union

INSIDE THE REPORT

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Chapter 1 – About Youth Participation Index | 6 |
| Chapter 2 – Availability of youth-specific data in the region | 12 |
| Chapter 3 – Youth Participation Index | 17 |
| Chapter 4 – A closer look at youth political participation | 19 |
| Chapter 5 – A closer look at youth economic participation | 26 |
| Chapter 6 – A closer look at youth social participation | 33 |
| Chapter 7 – Youth participation – a way forward | 38 |
| Annex 1 Methodological notes | 46 |
| Annex 2 Data collected in the process of preparing this report 2016-2021 for each of the participating countries | 49 |

Introduction

During the last six years, Youth Participation Index (YPI) has been published as a mechanism to gain insight into the broad political, economic and social context which can empower or alternatively hinder youth participation in society. Covering a 6-year data series, collected from 2016 to 2021 in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey, YPI provides a comprehensive overview of opportunities for youth through the lens of 25 indicators of political, economic and social participation.

The purpose of this annual monitoring report is to give an overview of the political, social and economic participation of youth in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey through a unique set of indicators.

Youth Participation Index was developed by the Youth Hub Western Balkan and Turkey Network of youth organizations (YHWBT Network). The network is coordinated by Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation from Serbia and implemented in partnership with Partners Albania for Change and Development from Albania, Youth Alliance - Krusevo from North Macedonia, NGO Prima from Montenegro and Community Volunteers Foundation from Turkey (TOG). The idea was to create a concrete tool that can be used by public authorities and civil society organizations to **systematically identify and address the most pressing challenges in youth participation** in Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. Regular publishing of the Youth Participation Index aims to:

- ✓ **Improve the practice of using data as a reliable base for any decision concerning youth;**
- ✓ **Compare countries according to key indicators of youth participation in all three dimensions: political, economic and social;**
- ✓ **Monitor progress in youth participation through the years in respective countries;**
- ✓ **Provide a practical tool for decision-makers, youth organizations and other stakeholders that supports the implementation of policies and programs aimed at the improvement of youth participation.**

During the last six years of monitoring the position of young people, the YPI has indicated that despite some evidence of progress, significant and persisting challenges concerning the participation of young people in the political, economic and social domain in the Western Balkans and Turkey still exist. Underrepresentation in political life, exclusion from employment and education, long periods of unemployment and risk of poverty are some of the formidable obstacles youth encounter in the region. During this time, significant efforts have been made to improve the availability of youth-specific data, such as data on youth in prisons and on youth receiving financial support within social protection system. Based on the collected information, youth organizations in the Western Balkans and Turkey have successfully advocated for changes in policy frameworks in line with the recommendations based on YPI data. However, given that changes in this area are slow and that there has been little or insignificant progress in many aspects related to youth participation (such as the number of young people in political positions), it is clear that public authorities must intensify efforts to address the low level of youth participation.

This edition of YPI introduces significant changes in methodology for calculating the Index in order to improve the reliability and efficacy of the Index. For the first time it is possible to prepare Social Participation Index and gain a higher level of insight into this aspect of youth participation. As in the previous years, YHWBT Network hopes that YPI could provide guidelines for advocacy efforts of civil society organizations and evidence-informed youth policy.

Chapter 1

About Youth Participation Index

WHY DO WE NEED AN INDEX RELATED TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION?

Youth participation can be defined as a **“process of involving young people in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives”**¹. Many different reasons and arguments for promoting youth participation have been put forward, from the argument that young people have the right to be treated with respect and when appropriate be involved and consulted² to reference plethora of research results on **positive effects of participation on both personal and wider social level**. Namely, research indicates that through participation young people can gain critical knowledge and skills and develop a feeling of social inclusion and psychosocial well-being. Improving services, programs and policies that have a direct impact on young people through engaging them in their design, implementation and evaluation is also one of the observed benefits. Lastly, increasing youth civic competencies and broadening their civic activity is seen as something beneficial for society as a whole.

There is a **continuous policy commitment to youth participation** as well. The recommendation of the Council of Europe member states to award high priority to youth participation in their public youth policies was included in the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on citizenship and participation of young people in public life in 2006. This document states that “education for participation and providing opportunities for experiencing participation is a prerequisite for the necessary and ongoing improvement of democracy”. **The European Union’s (EU) Youth Strategy “Youth – Investing and Empowering” 2019-2027**³ places youth participation at the forefront of youth policy. Member States are invited to encourage and promote inclusive democratic participation of all young people in democratic processes and society, to actively engage them, support youth representations at local, regional and national levels and explore and promote the use of innovative and alternative forms of democratic participation. **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**⁴ also recognizes the active role of young people as “critical agents of change”. The first priority of the UN 2030 Youth Strategy⁵ is “Engagement, Participation and Advocacy - Amplify youth voices for the promotion of a peaceful, just and sustainable world”.

“Europe cannot afford wasted talent, social exclusion or disengagement among its youth. Young people should not only be architects of their own life, but also contribute to positive change in society.” – EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027

1 Kiilakoski, T. (2020). Perspectives on youth participation - https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/59895423/Kiilakoski_Participation_Analytical_Paper_final%252005-05.pdf/b7b77c27-5bc3-5a90-594b-a18d253b7e67

2 Ibid.

3 Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy (COM/2018/269), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269>

4 Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

5 Youth 2030 – United Nations Youth Strategy - https://5d962978-9e17-4b96-91be-93983605fae8.filesusr.com/ugd/b1d674_9f63445fc59a41b6bb50cbd4f800922b.pdf

THREE KEY DIMENSIONS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Three dimensions of participation captured by YPI are assessed through a set of carefully chosen indicators (a detailed description is available in Annex 1):

- **Political dimension** refers to the opportunities young people have to get involved in political processes – to be informed on the work of the government, parliament and municipalities, to participate in youth networks and to be elected to political positions.
- **Economic dimension** refers to the degree of inclusion or, to the contrary, exclusion of young people from the labour market. It captures the degree of their activity, employment, and self-employment.
- **Social dimension** refers to the active participation of young people in social life. It is assessed based on the integration of young people in the community through formal and nonformal education, as well as through an absence of markers of potential exclusion – due to poverty, dependence on the social welfare system and time spent in prison or correctional facilities.

STRUCTURE OF THE YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX

| | |
|--|--|
| Indicators of political participation | Percentage of young ministers in Government |
| | Percentage of young deputy ministers in Government |
| | Percentage of young MPs in the parliament |
| | Percentage of young mayors |
| | Use of online tools for information and participation in the decision-making process of government and parliament institutions |
| | Use of online tools for information and participation in the decision-making process within municipalities |
| | Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on a national level |
| | Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on a local level |
| Indicators of economic participation | NEET rate |
| | Youth unemployment rate |
| | Long-term youth unemployment rate |
| | Youth labour force participation rate |
| | Youth employment rate |
| | Young people that started their own business with the financial support of the state *not used in the calculation of the Index |
| | Self-employed young people *not used in the calculation of the Index |
| Indicators of social participation | Young people at risk of poverty |
| | Young people in prisons |
| | Young people who are a part of social protection system *not used in the calculation of the Index |
| | Dropout from secondary education *not used in the calculation of the Index |
| | Young people who enrolled in tertiary education *not used in the calculation of the Index |
| | Young people who graduated from tertiary education *not used in the calculation of the Index |
| | Participation rate in non-formal education and training (last 4 weeks) *not used in the calculation of the Index |
| | Share of early leavers from education and training, persons aged 18–24 years |
| | Population aged 30–34 with tertiary educational attainment level |
| | Participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training (last 4 weeks) |

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

Some of the indicators are similar or identical to those used to monitor the progress towards sustainable development goals (SDG) set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey need to regularly create data for these indicators, in order to enable the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

| Youth Participation Dimension | SDG | SDG Indicator | Youth Participation Indicator |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Youth Social Participation | GOAL 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere | 1.2.2 Percentage of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its manifestations according to national definitions | Young people at risk of poverty |
| | | 1.3.1 Percentage of population covered by the social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable | Young people receiving financial support through the social protection system |
| | GOAL 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all | 4.1.2 Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education) | Dropout from secondary education |
| | | 4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex | Participation rate in non-formal education and training |
| Youth Economic Participation | GOAL 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all | 8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities | Youth unemployment rate |
| | | 8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training | NEET rate |
| Youth Political Participation | GOAL 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls | 5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments | Young men/women government ministers; Young men/women MPs; Young men/women mayors; Young men/women government deputy ministers |
| | GOAL 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels | Proportions of positions in national and local institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups | |

THE RATIONALE FOR A YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX

Using an index as a measure has its advantages but it also comes with potential risks that need to be mitigated.

ADVANTAGES OF USING AN INDEX:

- ✓ It can summarize complex, multidimensional youth-specific data;
- ✓ It is easier to interpret than many separate indicators;
- ✓ It can assess progress over time;
- ✓ It provides a mechanism for cross-country comparisons.

DISADVANTAGES OF USING AN INDEX:

- ✗ It may send misleading policy messages if it is misinterpreted;
- ✗ The choice of indicators is limited to the data that is systematically collected annually and processed in the same way in all countries.

The main advantages of using an index lie in the fact that it is simple and easy to understand, but the potential risk is that it can be misinterpreted. Thus, it is crucial to ensure that the index does not oversimplify complex issues. To achieve this, the YHWBT Network has decided to prepare annual reports with detailed interpretations of the index and its implications, taking methodological limitations into account. In addition, the research team from five participating countries was committed to continuously revise and update the methodology.

CALCULATING THE YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX

There are several steps for calculating the Index (more information is available in Annex 1):

1. Firstly, missing values of indicators are addressed. A process of Cold Deck Imputation is applied, meaning that the most recent prior value for the indicator is used if data is not available for the previous year. Indicators with insufficient or unavailable data or those for which different methodologies of data collection is used are not included in the calculation of the index.
2. All indicators are made comparable in scale. Some indicators need to be inverted so that higher values show better performance. In order for indicators to be compared and combined into a single score, researchers conduct a process of normalization. Under this process, data for each indicator is scaled between a score of 1 to 100, where 100 represents the target value. The formula: $y_i = 1 + 99 * (x_i - x_{min}) / (x_{max} - x_{min})$ is used, where y_i represents the normalized score, x_i original score, x_{min} corresponds to zero and x_{max} represents the target score.

3. In the final step, scores of each dimension of youth participation are calculated by averaging all indicators of that dimension. For instance, Youth Political Participation Index is calculated by averaging values of indicators of youth political participation. Lastly, the overall Youth Participation Index is calculated as an average of scores for each dimension of youth participation.

This year, several corrections and methodological changes have been made to improve the reliability and validity of the Index. Detailed methodological notes are available in Annex 1.

SETTING THE TARGETS IN THE AREA OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Before presenting the data, it is important to note that, as in previous years, the data will be compared to the targeted values. These targets were initially proposed by policy researchers engaged in the preparation of this report, drawing from sources such as the EU2020 Strategy, statistics of developed countries and researchers’ assessments and then further modified over the years of index development.

Most of the targets for indicators of political participation are based on researchers’ opinions of what would be the desired value of the indicator. The only exception is the indicator “percentage of young MPs”, which refers to the target set by the Inter-Parliamentary Union Forum of Young Parliamentarians⁶, a global organization of national parliaments, to be reached by 2030.

| Indicators of political participation | Target percentage |
|--|---|
| Young government ministers | 5% (Source: researchers’ assessment) |
| Young MPs | 15% (Source: Target set by Inter-Parliamentary Union Forum of Young Parliamentarians) |
| Young mayors | 6% (Source: researchers’ assessment – based on highest percentage registered in the process of index calculation) |
| Young government deputy ministers | 10% (Source: researchers’ assessment) |
| Online tools for information and participation in the decision-making of government and parliament | 100% (Source: researchers’ assessment) |
| Online tools for information and participation in the decision-making of municipalities | 100% (Source: researchers’ assessment) |
| Existence of youth structures at local levels | 100% (Source: researchers’ assessment) |
| Existence of youth structure at the national level | 100% (Source: researchers’ assessment) |

Concerning the indicators for economic participation, values of all targets represent the highest registered value among European Union’s countries for the given year (or the lowest one if the lower value is a more desirable outcome). The only exception is the indicator “Young people that started their own business with the financial support of the state” for which the target was set based on the researchers’ opinions of what would be the desired value of the indicator.

⁶ The Inter-Parliamentary Union is the global organization of national parliaments, gathering 179 Member Parliaments and 13 Associate Members. More information can be found on the website <https://www.ipu.org/about-us>.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

| Indicators of economic participation | Target percentage |
|--|-------------------------------|
| NEET rate | 5.5% (Eurostat, 2021) |
| Youth unemployment rate | 5.2% (Eurostat, 2021) |
| Long-term youth unemployment rate | 0.5% (Eurostat, 2021) |
| Youth Labour force participation rate | 83.0% (Eurostat, 2021) |
| Youth employment rate | 77.0% (Eurostat, 2021) |
| Young people that started their own businesses with the financial support of the state | 60% (Researchers' assessment) |
| Self-employed young people | 14.9% (Eurostat, 2021) |

The **Social Participation Index** is calculated this year for the first time, so target values are set for the first time. For four indicators, similarly as in the case of economic participation, targets represent the highest or lowest registered value among European Union's countries for the given year (depending on which is the more desirable outcome). In the case of the indicator concerning youth in prisons, the target is based on the researchers' assessment.

| Indicators of social participation | Target percentage |
|---|---------------------------------|
| At-risk-of-poverty rate | 8.60% (Eurostat, 2021) |
| Percentage of youth in prison | 21.0% (Researchers' assessment) |
| Share of early leavers from education and training, persons aged 18–24 years | 2.40% (Eurostat, 2021) |
| Population aged 30-34 with tertiary educational attainment level | 62.5% (Eurostat, 2021) |
| Participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training (last 4 weeks) | 66.0% (Eurostat, 2021) |

Chapter 2

Availability of youth-specific data in the region

To create, implement and monitor policy measures that effectively tackle the specific challenges young people face and to increase and improve youth participation, it is crucial to make quality data and evidence on youth widely available. Decision-makers, youth organizations and young people themselves need to have access to recent and reliable youth-specific data.

The YPI aims to provide insight into different aspects of youth participation through a unique combination of indicators. Although the indicators have been chosen so that the data can be collected in each country for the respective age group (youth between 15 and 29 years of age) using the same methodology, some of the issues persist. Thus, in the following text, the availability of data concerning youth political, economic and social participation is discussed and put in the context of the EU integration.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA ON YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN 2021

The data on youth political participation can be collected, although there are no official statistics on any of the chosen indicators. Since the beginning of collecting this data for the YPI in 2016, there has been little improvement and, in some cases, researchers even reported that the availability of data has deteriorated.

Availability of data for indicators of political participation per country in 2021

| Indicators | Albania | Montenegro | North Macedonia | Serbia | Turkey |
|---|---------|------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| % Of Young Ministers In Government | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| % Of Young Deputy Ministers | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| % Of Young Mps | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| % Of Young Mayors | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Online Tools For Information And Participation In The Decision-Making Process Of Government And Parliament Institutions | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Online Tools For Information And Participation In The Decision-Making Process Within Municipalities | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Existence Of Youth Structure (Councils/Parliaments/Unions) On A National Level | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Existence Of Youth Structure (Councils/Parliaments/Unions) On A Local Level | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

The data on youth representation in parliaments and other political positions are collected through desk research conducted by researchers in each of the countries. This process mostly consists of checking the official websites of the Government, Parliament and municipalities, although in some cases necessary information is not available – either there is no information about the age of persons appointed to political positions or the websites are not regularly updated when the political structure changes. Thus, in some cases the researchers must invest additional effort to collect the data. In general, the information about the age structure is not proactively displayed on the official websites; one of the exceptions is the site of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, where the statistics regarding the age of MPs are provided, although not in a way which would facilitate gaining the information on the percentage of young people appointed to this position⁷. It should be noted that the absence of systematic data and information on youth representation in national parliaments has already been recognized as a problem at the global level⁸.

Concerning the data on the use of online tools, the problem is to identify official social network channels used by the Government, Parliament and municipalities. For instance, in some cases communication with citizens is carried out via the social network channels of mayors instead of municipalities and in many cases the official channels are inactive. When it comes to data about youth structures at the local level, this data is not available through official institutions at the national level so it must be collected from the municipalities themselves.

In Turkey there is an additional difficulty regarding the lack of data at a local level. The reason for this is the fact that Turkey has 2951 municipalities, so the manual counting of online tools and youth networks at the local level is not feasible. To collect relevant information which would help analyze the situation regarding youth political participation at the local level in Turkey, during the last two years data was collected in 81 city municipalities.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA ON YOUTH ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION IN 2021

The data on economic participation has been collected using official statistics, which are published annually. The main source for data on indicators of youth economic participation is the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is conducted in each country by national statistical offices using official methodologies in line with EUROSTAT.

The only exception is the information on young people who started their own businesses with financial support from the state, measured as the percentage of young people who received subsidies among all applicants.

The data regarding this indicator is collected by the official institution in charge of providing subsidies, and this is the only indicator for which it was difficult to obtain this information. Concerning all indicators, the data for the age group 15-29 is not available in the reports from the national statistics institutions in all countries, and in some cases, it can be gained only via a paid request (this is the case with North Macedonia).

⁷ The website provides information about the decade of birth of MPs, which does not correspond to the age structure reported by official statistics. More information: www.parlament.gov.rs/national-assembly/national-assembly-in-numbers/age-structure.1746.html, 26 11 2022

⁸ Inter-Parliamentary Union periodically conducts surveys on youth participation in national parliaments, <https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/youth-empowerment>.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

Availability of data for indicators of economic participation per country in 2021

| Indicators | Albania | Montenegro | North Macedonia | Serbia | Turkey |
|--|---------|------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| NEET rate | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Youth unemployment rate | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Long-term youth unemployment rate | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Youth labor force participation rate | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Youth employment rate | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Young people that started their own business with the financial support of state | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Self-employed young people | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

It should be noted that from the year 2021 onwards⁹ the new methodology of the European Union LFS has been in force. The introduced changes concern the operational definitions of the three labour statuses (employed, unemployed and outside the labour force). The new European regulation prescribes that the EU countries shall apply the new redesigned concepts as regards the LFS. This means that the data from the previous years are not completely comparable with data gathered from 2021. Member States and Eurostat are producing break-corrected series to ensure data comparability over time, which will be gradually available on the Eurostat website.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA ON YOUTH SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN 2021

The table on the availability of data for indicators of the social dimension of youth participation clearly shows that most obstacles have been encountered in this regard, similar to the previous years¹⁰. From the very beginning, researchers faced the challenge of choosing an adequate set of indicators for the social dimension, and that all countries that collect data each year use the same methodology.

Availability of data for indicators of social participation per country in 2021

| Indicators | Albania | Montenegro | North Macedonia | Serbia | Turkey |
|---|---------|------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Young people at risk of poverty | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Young people part of social welfare system | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Young people in prisons | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Dropout from secondary education | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Young people enrolled in tertiary education | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Young people graduated from tertiary education | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Participation rate in non-formal education and training | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ |

9 More information is available at the official website: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/EN/employ_esms.htm

10 In Montenegro the reason for a lack of data is partly due to problems caused by cyber-attacks that were initiated against Montenegro in the end of August and September and which caused disruption to public and government services.

In collecting the data regarding the educational status of the YPI, there have been challenges in finding the indicators for which the data was collected in the same way in each of the countries. It was decided to include three indicators capturing the dropout rate in secondary education, as well as enrollment and completion of tertiary education. Indicators related to the formal education system are usually collected by the national statistics offices. However, the methodology for calculating these indicators somewhat varies between the countries, due to the differences in educational systems and how relevant data is being collected. The data regarding education has its limitations since in most countries it still cannot be collected by following young people through education until they drop out or graduate, using individual student registers. This represented an obstacle in the calculation of the index of social participation - not only are these indicators not fully comparable for all participating countries, but it is additionally difficult to determine what their target values would be. Thus, this year it was decided to pilot the calculation of the social participation index using the education indicators reported in the Eurostat database, including the percentage of early leavers from education and training¹¹ and the population aged 30-34 with tertiary educational attainment level.

The data on young people at risk of poverty comes from a Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC), which is being conducted in all countries. The problem with missing data regarding this indicator is that the results of this survey are sometimes published after the completion of this report. It is expected that the SILC results for 2021 for Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia will be published in December 2022.

When the Index was first developed, most participating countries did not have data on young people in prisons. Over the past six years, the system of recording and providing data has improved. For example, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia at first provided the number of young prisoners without the total number of prisoners, but in the second year, it provided the percentage of young people in prisons. The Ministries of Justice in each of the countries now collect the data by age group, although they still do not publish it on their official websites. Only Turkey still has difficulties when it comes to collecting this type of data, although a percentage of prisoners in the age group 18-34 has been obtained which is noteworthy progress.

Similarly, efforts are made to change the status quo regarding the social welfare system and to include youth-sensitive data in this area as well. Serbia was, until this year, the only country that could provide this information. Starting in 2020 in North Macedonia and in 2021 in Albania researchers have been able to collect data concerning this indicator which is a significant step forward.

¹¹ While the dropout rate in secondary education refers to the percentage of enrolled students in secondary education as a share of the total number of graduated students from secondary education, early leavers are defined as individuals aged 18-24 who have at most completed a lower secondary education and were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the labor force survey. More information is available in Annex 1.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA IN THE CONTEXT OF EU INTEGRATION

Having reliable and transparent statistics is a major request from the EU to all the countries during the pre-accession phase¹². It is required that the Member States be able to produce statistics based on professional independence, impartiality, reliability, transparency, and confidentiality. Common rules are provided for the methodology, production, and dissemination of statistical information. Negotiations under Chapter 18 relating to statistics include the harmonization of the legal regulations of the candidate country with the EU *acquis communautaire*. This chapter is considered especially important, as the positive changes resulting from a productive negotiation process will¹³ provide better quality, availability, and credibility of data. Reliable and comparable statistics are the preconditions for a successful negotiation.

As candidate countries, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey are undergoing a process of appraisal of their ability to assume the obligations of EU membership, and their progress concerning Chapter 18 on statistics is assessed within annual reports¹⁴. According to the assessment in the latest reports, as in the previous years, all of the countries are still moderately prepared in the area of statistics. It is assessed that in the case of North Macedonia and Serbia progress was made, whereas in the case of Albania, Montenegro and Turkey limited progress was made on last year's recommendations.

Social statistics, which are relevant for this report, are generally assessed well. The survey on income and living conditions is regularly carried out and statistics on education are available. It is noted that all of the countries, except Turkey, conduct labour force surveys regularly. According to the report published in October 2022, the Turkish Statistical Institute is yet to provide Eurostat with labour force surveys (LFS) data in line with the new *acquis*.

The next chapters will provide an overview of the Youth Participation Index 2021 and the most recent data¹⁵ on youth political, economic and social participation.

12 European Commission - Chapters of the *acquis*/negotiating chapters: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/glossary/chapters-acquis-negotiating-chapters_en

13 *Acquis communautaire* is a "French term referring to the cumulative body of European Community laws, comprising the objectives, substantive rules, policies and, in particular, the primary and secondary legislation and case law – all of which form part of the legal order of the European Union", <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/acquis-communautaire>

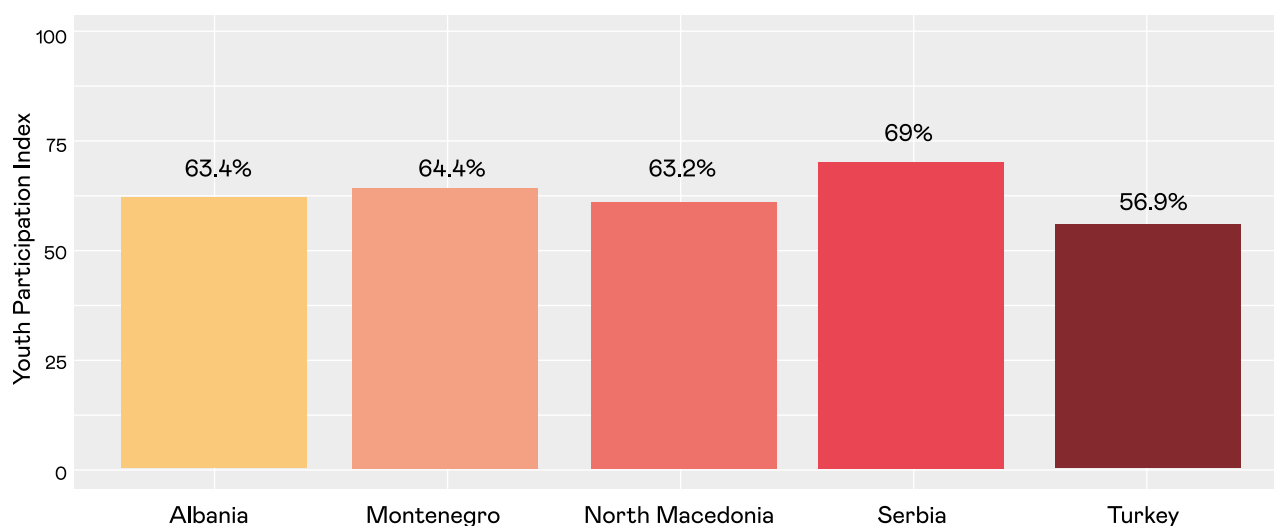
14 More information on the website: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/strategy-and-reports_en

15 The program R: R Core Team (2021) was used for data analysis. R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. URL <https://www.R-project.org/>. The key packages used in the analysis are Wickham et al., (2019). Welcome to the tidyverse. *Journal of Open Source Software*, 4(43), 1686, <https://doi.org/10.21105/joss.01686>.

Chapter 3

Youth Participation Index

The Youth Participation Index is prepared based on indicators of economic, social and political participation. Indicators of social participation are taken into account when calculating the index for the first time this year. To make the index comparable between countries, only those indicators with available data from all countries were taken into account. The complete list of indicators is available in Annex 1.



Taking all considerations into account, what can be concluded by looking at the index?

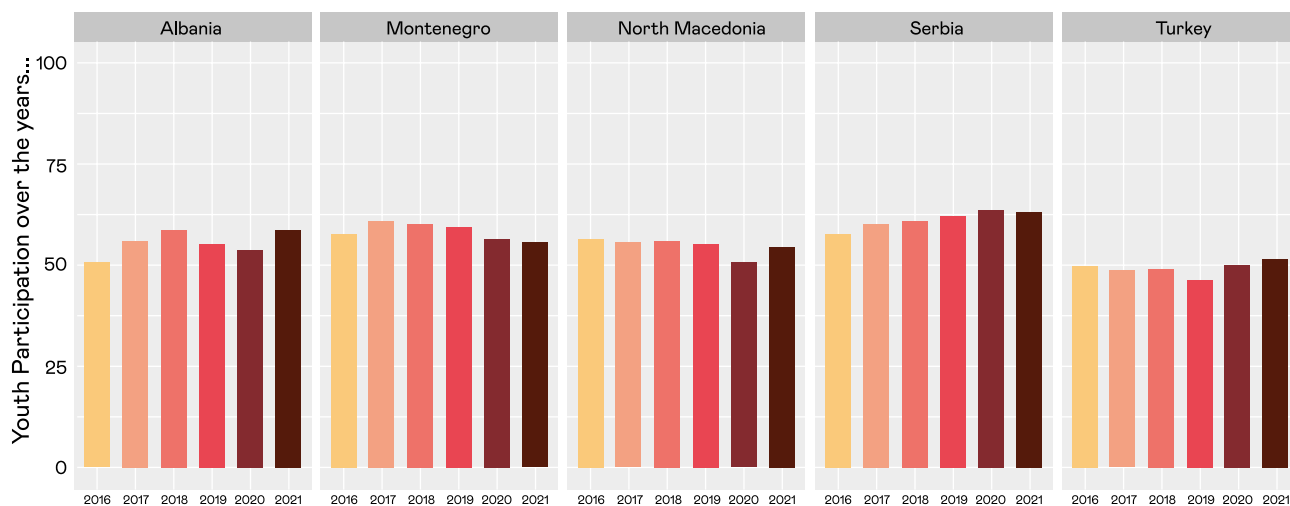
- 1. The first conclusion is that a significant discrepancy exists between the current situations in the five participating countries compared to the target value, which is 100.**
- 2. Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey are mostly similar in terms of the state of youth participation. In all of them, there are challenges concerning the participation of young people in the political, economic and social domains, as confirmed by the previously reported research results, although the specific barriers faced by youth do sometimes differ. The value of YPI for Turkey indicates that young people in this country face some additional challenges.**

Due to the changes in methodology and the inclusion of the social participation index for the first time in 2021, it is not possible to compare the values of the index of youth participation over the years. This can be done only if the political and economic index of youth participation is taken into account in

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

the process of calculating the index of youth participation, since they can be calculated for the period 2016-2021. However, when interpreting the data it should be noted that these two indicators do not provide a complete picture.

Based on this data, different trends in youth participation over the years can be observed in the region. Even though there has been evidence of improvement in some cases, values of YPI have mostly fluctuated over the years without major shifts. For further interpretation of these trends, insight into how have values of specific indicators changed over the years is needed.



In the next three chapters, we will look into three different dimensions of youth participation: political, economic and social participation. In each of the following three chapters one of the dimensions of youth participation will be covered in more detail. Following the discussion of the most recent data on each of the aspects of participation, recommendations for improving the state of youth participation will be presented.

Chapter 4

A closer look at youth political participation

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE STILL VASTLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THE REGION.

KEY FACTS AND FINDINGS

The situation concerning political participation in all participating countries is unfavorable and needs to be improved significantly. Values of the political participation index in 2021 ranged from around 29 in Turkey to 50 in Serbia, which is far from the target of 100.

There has been some evidence of progress over the years in Albania and Serbia, whereas the situation is largely stagnating in Montenegro and Turkey and even deteriorating in North Macedonia.

The youth are still vastly underrepresented in political life in all countries. In 2021, young people accounted for between 0.85% of MPs in Turkey to around 5% of MPs in Serbia. There were no ministers in Government and almost no mayors under thirty in any of the countries. Out of all the countries, deputy ministers under thirty were present only in Albania and Serbia.

The results of the survey for 2021 indicated that **in all the countries the majority of ministries and parliaments use online tools for informing the public**, which is important for enabling youth participation. However, the use of online tools by municipalities at the local level needs to be significantly improved in Albania and North Macedonia.

THE NUMBER OF YOUNG MINISTERS IN GOVERNMENTS OF

Albania
Montenegro
North Macedonia
Serbia
Turkey

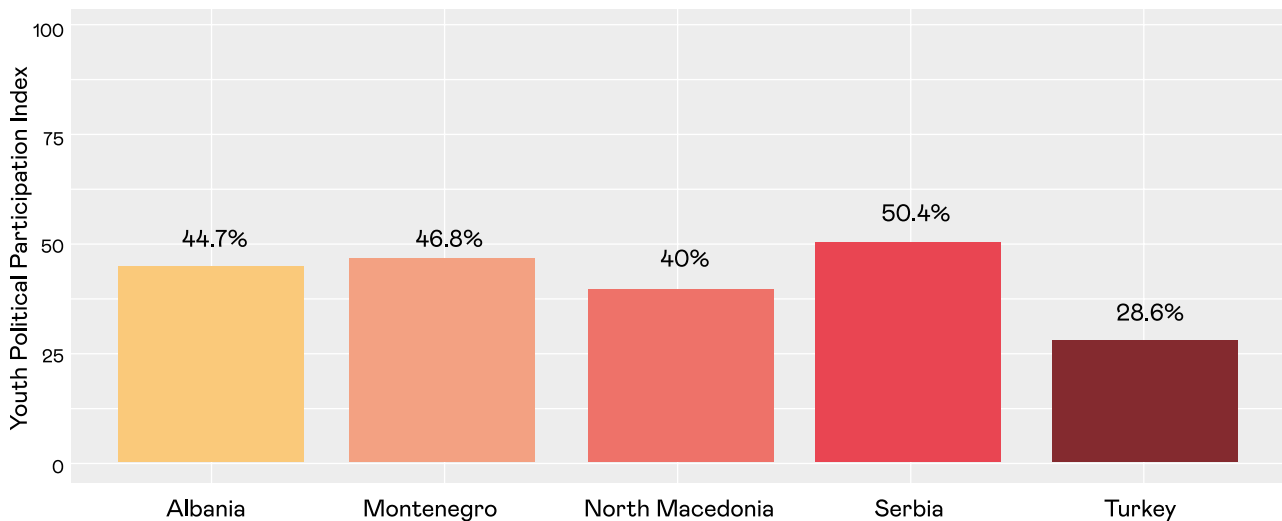
0



In Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia there are established youth structures at the national level, whereas **this is not the case only in Turkey**. The situation in Albania has changed compared to the previous period, as the approval of Law No.75/2019 for Youth, has contributed to the creation of youth structures at the national level, such as the National Youth Agency, National Youth Council, and National Youth Congress.

When it comes to the local level, the **percentage of municipalities that have active youth structures (based on their websites and social network pages) is below 50%** in all countries except Serbia, which could seriously hinder youth participation in their local communities.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION INDEX

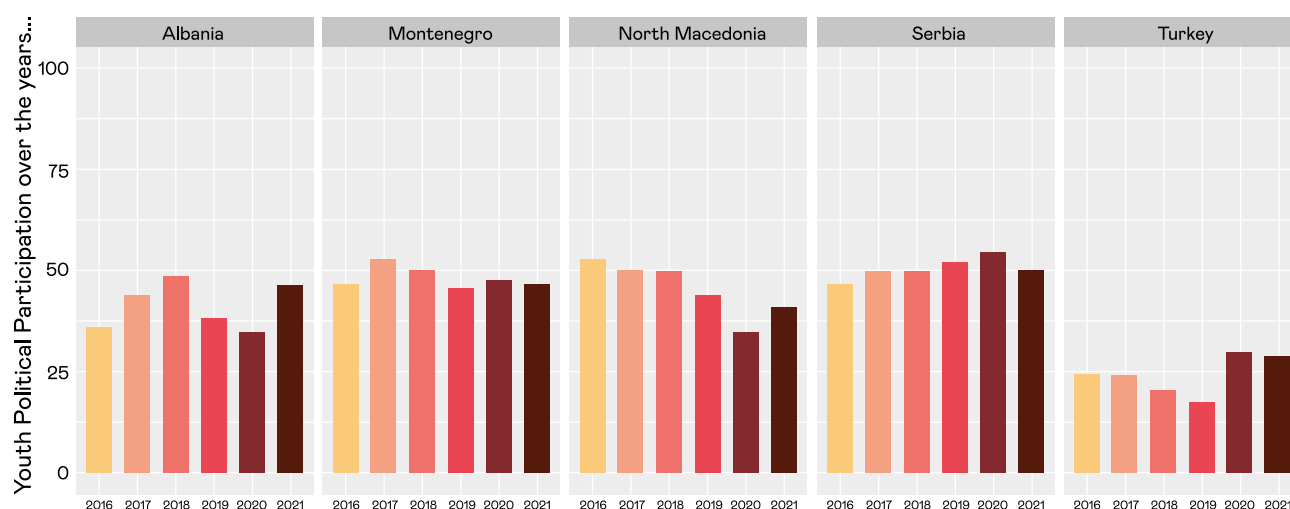


Political Participation Index comprises indicators of political participation¹⁶ which were collected in all countries: representation of young people on various political positions, the existence of youth structures and use of youth-friendly online tools by decision-makers on a national and local levels. When we look at the values of this Index, which combines these various indicators, what conclusions can be drawn

- 1. Firstly, the situation concerning political participation in all participating countries is still far from what it could be. The highest registered value of this index is 50, which is significantly lower than the target value of 100.**
- 2. Secondly, the situation in Turkey concerning political participation is, judging from the index and the collected data, even more worrying than in other countries, due to the low number of young people in political positions, the absence of youth structure at the national level and low percentage of municipalities with established youth structures.**

¹⁶ Values for 2021 were available for all countries. However, it should be noted that the data concerning the local level in Turkey was collected for the sample of municipalities.

What trends can we observe if we look at the value of this index over the years?



It seems that in all countries opportunities for political participation varied throughout the years. In some countries there was a period of decline compared to 2016, followed by a period of improvement (such is the case in North Macedonia), whereas in others the situation is reverse – progress was followed by stagnation or slight decline (for instance in Montenegro). Overall, when comparing the situation in 2021 to the one present six years ago, there has been some evidence of progress over the years in Albania and Serbia, whereas the situation is largely stagnating in Montenegro and Turkey and even deteriorating in North Macedonia (although judging from the collected data the situation has started improving compared to the previous year).

The data suggest that all countries are far from reaching the target. When we look at the values of the index some significant patterns emerge. However, to understand them and examine this data more closely, we need to look at the values of all indicators of youth political participation in more detail¹⁷.

YOUNG PEOPLE CONTINUE TO BE SEVERELY UNDER-REPRESENTED IN PARLIAMENTS AND OTHER POLITICAL POSITIONS

In all participating countries youth participation in political life is still at a low level (Table 6). In 2021, young people accounted for between 0.85% of MPs in Turkey to around 5% of MPs in Serbia. To put this data into context, we can compare these figures with the share of young people in total population. Young people (15-29) account for around 16% of the total population in Serbia to 23% in Turkey¹⁸, which makes their underrepresentation in parliaments even more worrying. This is similar to the situation at the global level, where the average share of MPs under age 30 was around 2% although young people account for more than half of the world's population. At the same time, some countries manage to make their parliaments more inclusive, such as Norway with close to 14% of MPs under 30 and Sweden with 12% of young MPs. Taking this into account, the Inter-Parliamentary

¹⁷ The table with all data regarding political participation is in Annex 2 of the document.

¹⁸ Source of data: Eurostat

Union’s Forum of Young Parliamentarians, which is a global organization of national parliaments, set the target of 15% of MPs under 30 to be reached by 2030¹⁹. Based on the collected data, all countries for which YPI was calculated are far from reaching this goal.

Not only are young people insufficiently represented in parliaments, but they are also not being appointed to other political positions. There were no ministers in Government and almost no mayors under thirty in any of the countries. Out of all the countries, there were deputy ministers under thirty only in Albania and Serbia.

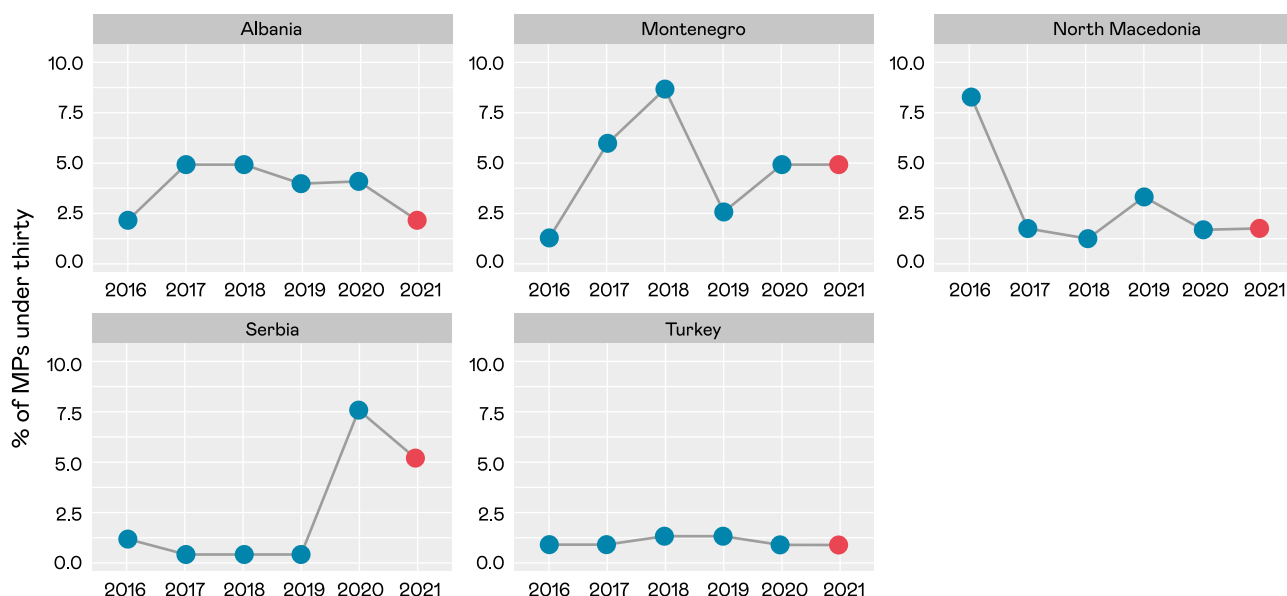
Table 1 Percentage of young people in political positions

| Indicators | Albania | Montenegro | North Macedonia | Serbia | Turkey |
|------------------------------------|---------|------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| % of young ministers in Government | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| % of young deputy ministers | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1.6 | 0 |
| % of young MPs | 2 | 4.9 | 1.7 | 5.2 | 0.8 |
| % of young mayors | 0 | 0 | 1.3 | 0.6 | 0 |

Progress in this area has been very slow and in some cases the situation has deteriorated. The largest number of MPs in any of the participating countries was registered in North Macedonia in 2016 when young MPs accounted for 8.3% of all MPs and in Montenegro in 2018 when this percentage was 8.6%. In North Macedonia, there was a decline in the subsequent years, when the percentage of MPs under thirty never exceeded 3%. In Montenegro, the percentage of MPs dropped to 2.5% in 2019, but it almost doubled in the following years. Albania also experienced a decline compared to previous years, when this number was around 4%, to only 2%. In Serbia, there has been a sharp increase in the percentage of MPs under thirty in the last two years compared to only 0.4% in 2017. On the other hand, in Turkey, this percentage was consistently low, around 1%. When it comes to the question of gender balance, in Montenegro all MPs under thirty are male. In other countries this is not the case, female MPs either slightly outnumber male MPs, or the male/female ratio is close to 50:50.

¹⁹ The Inter-Parliamentary Union is the global organization of national parliaments, gathering 179 Member Parliaments and 13 Associate Members. More information can be found on website <https://www.ipu.org/about-us>.

Youth participation in national parliaments



For a young person, becoming a minister or a mayor is highly unlikely judging by the collected data. In all participating countries, there have been no ministers under thirty in the period 2016-2021²⁰ and in North Macedonia and Turkey there were no deputy ministers under thirty in this period as well. In Serbia and Albania in 2021 young women were appointed as deputy ministers. Moreover, in Serbia and North Macedonia young men were appointed as mayors, although in exceedingly rare cases (only one of 80 mayors in North Macedonia and one out of 162 mayors of cities and municipalities in Serbia). The highest registered percentage of young mayors in any of the countries in the last five years was 6% in Albania in the period from 2016 to 2018, although in the last three years this percentage dropped to zero after local elections.

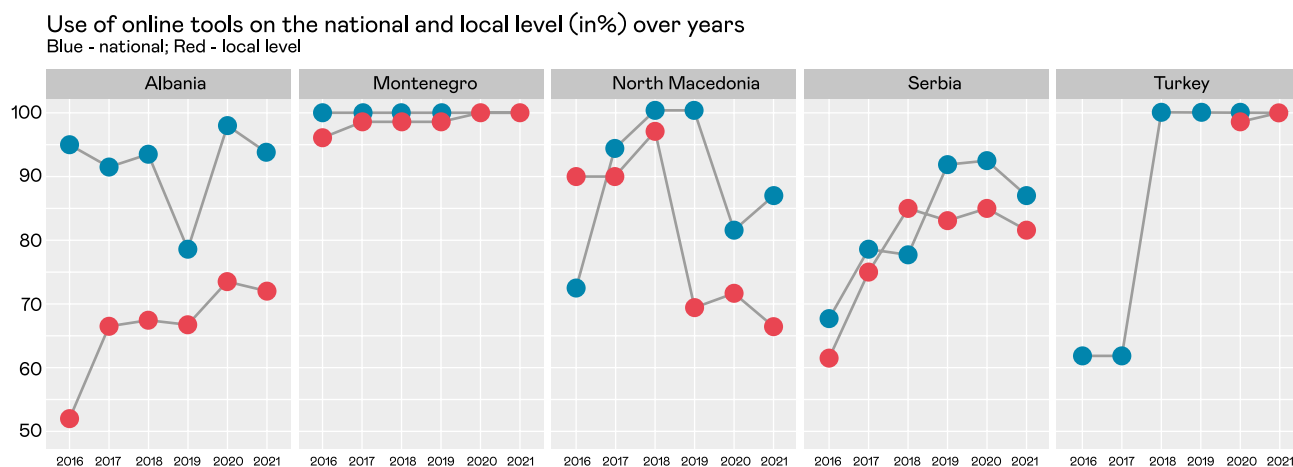
ONLINE TOOLS FOR GATHERING INFORMATION ON YOUTH AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF GOVERNMENTS, PARLIAMENTS AND MUNICIPALITIES ARE STILL NOT COMPLETELY UTILIZED

The results of the survey for 2021 indicated that in all countries the majority of ministries and parliaments use online tools - websites, Twitter and Facebook accounts, which is important for enabling youth participation. In Montenegro this percentage was 100% each year since 2016, whereas Turkey managed to reach 100% in 2018 and they are maintaining that score. In these two countries the use of online tools at the local level is also at the highest possible level²¹. The use of online tools at both national and local levels could be improved in North Macedonia, where the use of online tools at the national level stood at around 87% and the local level at 66% in 2021. In Albania, the percentage of the use of online tools at the national level is high, 94%, but it could be improved at the local level since only around 72% of municipalities use these tools.

²⁰ It should be noted that in Albania, Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Youth and Children respectively 32 and 31 years old, ages very close to the youth age range (15-29).

²¹ It should be taken into account when comparing the data, that data from Turkey was collected on a sample of municipalities, rather than examining all municipalities like in other countries, which was needed due to a large number of municipalities.

Youth structures absent in many municipalities in the region



YOUTH STRUCTURES ABSENT IN MANY MUNICIPALITIES IN THE REGION

Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia have established youth structures at the national level, whereas this is still not true for Turkey.

The situation in Albania has changed compared to the previous period, as the approval of law No.75/2019 “For Youth”, has contributed to the creation of youth structures at the national level, such as the National Youth Agency, National Youth Council, and National Youth Congress.

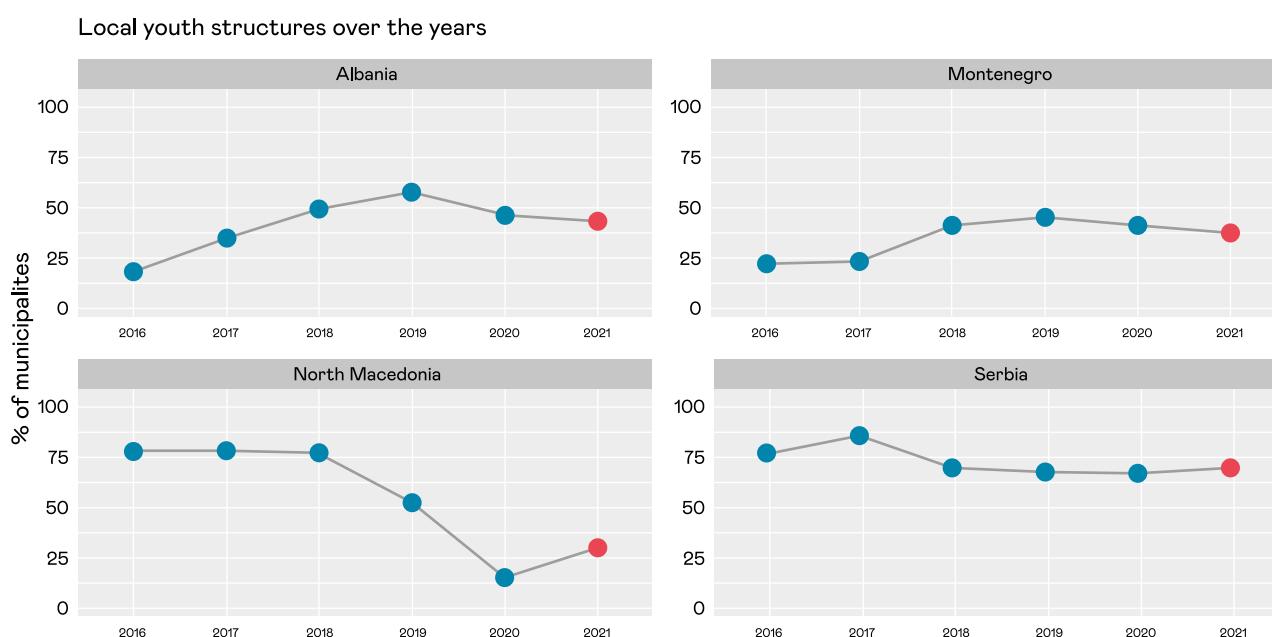
Youth structures at the national and local levels

| Country | Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on a national level | % of municipalities with established youth structures (councils/parliaments/unions) |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Albania | ✓ | 43% |
| Montenegro | ✓ | 38% |
| North Macedonia | ✓ | 30% |
| Serbia | ✓ | 70% |
| Turkey | ✗ | 17% |

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

In Turkey in 2013²² there was an amendment to the Decree Law which established a legal basis for National Youth Council. In the following years' negotiations and technical preparations were carried out to establish it in 2019, nevertheless, it has not been achieved to this day. One significant step forward, was that the GOFOR Youth Organizations Forum, established with the support of the Community Volunteers Foundation and Youth Services Centre, became a member of the European Youth Forum with observer status in 2019.

When it comes to the local level, the percentage of municipalities that have active youth structures (based on their websites and social network pages) is below 50% in all countries except Serbia. Based on the information available online, it seems that there has been little progress concerning the number of municipalities that have active youth structures in 2021²³.



In Albania, this number has been increasing steadily from 2016 and it reached its highest value in 2019 when it rose to 57% but the percentage has been decreasing for two consecutive years. However, according to Law No. 75/2019 "For Youth" all the municipalities must establish official local youth structures in the form of local youth councils. According to the information provided by the municipalities, they are working on creating local youth councils and by 2022 most of the municipalities will have established one.

In Montenegro, the situation is almost the same compared to the previous year. Local youth clubs, previously established in eleven municipalities, ceased to operate and the process of appointing new administrators for the youth clubs has been slow.

In North Macedonia the decrease in the number of local youth structures was significant in 2020, but it began improving in 2021. The municipalities are obliged by the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies to establish local youth structures, so it can be expected that the situation will change.

²² Information available in the text published at: <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/turkiye/12-national-youth-law>

²³ Since data for Turkey at the local level has been collected only for 2020 and 2021, using different methodology due to the large number of municipalities, the progress over time could not be assessed.

Comparatively, in Serbia the current situation is more favorable when it comes to local youth structures than in other participating countries. In the last four years, the percentage of municipalities with established local youth structures has been stable and is around 70%.

Chapter 5

A closer look at youth economic participation

EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES REGISTERED IN PREVIOUS YEARS – A HIGH NUMBER OF (LONG-TERM) UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE, A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF THEM NOT BEING IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING PERSISTS.

KEY FACTS AND FINDINGS

The situation concerning economic participation in all participating countries is still worrying. The highest registered value of this index is 76, which is still lower than the target value of 100. Values of the economic participation index in 2021 ranged from around 65 in Montenegro to 76 in Serbia, which is far from the target of 100.

Based on the collected data, it seems that after a period of stagnation or decline in values of indicators of youth position in the labour market with the start of the pandemic in 2020, there has been no further significant deterioration. The only exception is Montenegro, where the situation deteriorated rapidly in 2020 and is yet to recover.

In most of the participating countries one in four young people is neither in employment nor in education or training. Young women more often find themselves in this situation. The largest gender gap was in Turkey (where the share for women was 21.7 percentage points higher than the one for men), whereas the smallest gap was recorded in Serbia (3.1 points higher for women)

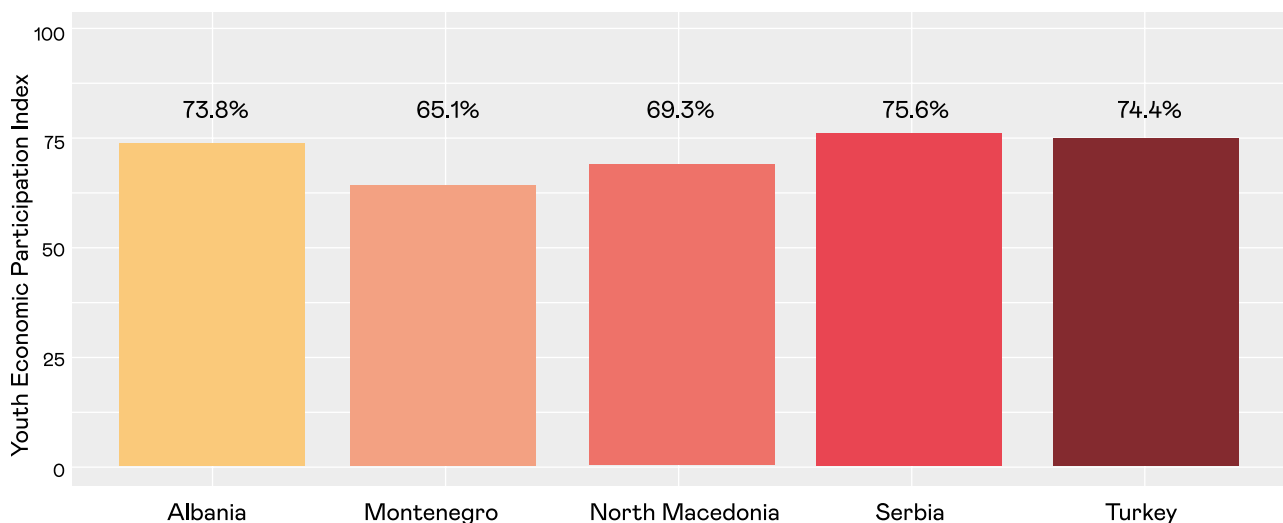
Youth unemployment continues to be a severe problem. In Albania, Serbia and Turkey the percentage of unemployed youth amounts to about 20%, in North Macedonia 28% and Montenegro 32.5%. A significant number of young people have been unemployed for longer than 12 months.

Striking differences in activity rates among young men and women persist. In all participating countries, except Montenegro, around 50% of young people aged 15-29 were active in the labour market. In Montenegro the activity rate started declining in 2020 and for two years in a row amounts to around 45%.

Not many young people opt for self-employment, especially young women. In 2021, the percentage of self-employed young people varied from around 3% in North Macedonia and Turkey to approximately 18% in Albania. Statistics on young people who apply for state support for self-employment are still not widely available.

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION INDEX

What can we conclude about the economic participation of young people by looking into the index of economic participation?

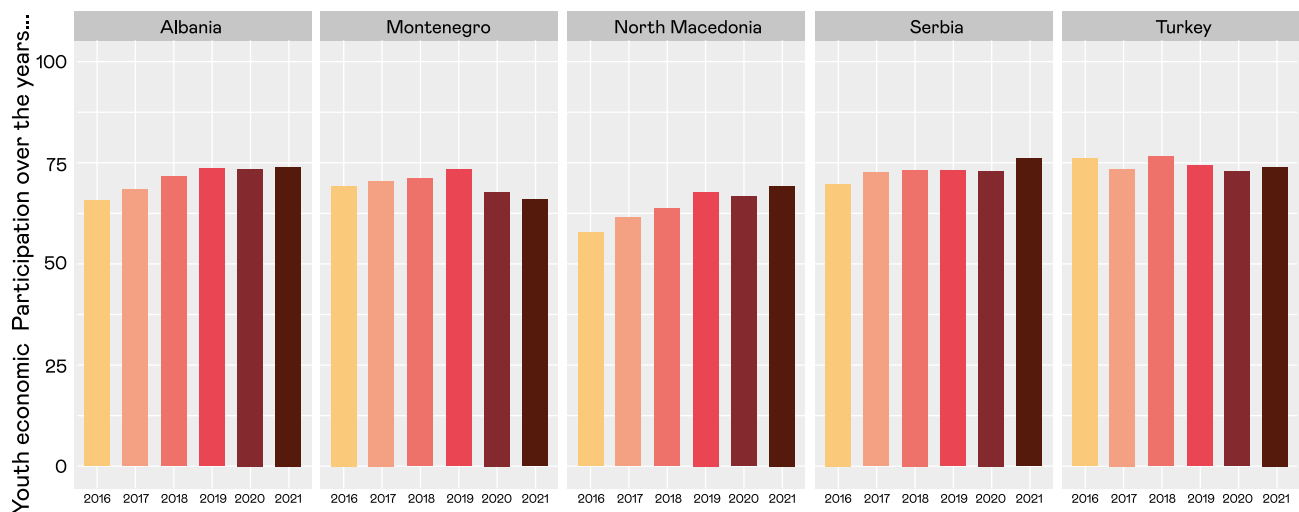


Judging from the index based on the data on economic participation, several conclusions can be made.

1. Similarly, as in the case of political participation, the economic participation of young people in all participating countries is still not as good as it could be. The highest registered value of this index is 76, which is still lower than the target value of 100.
2. Judging from the collected data, the state of economic participation of young people is relatively similar in Serbia, Turkey, North Macedonia and Albania. The situation is slightly more worrying in Montenegro, with the highest youth unemployment rate and lowest labour force participation out of all participating countries.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

What trends can we observe if we look at the value of this index over the years?



Firstly, it seems that after a period of stagnation or decline in values of indicators of youth position at the labour market with the start of the pandemic in 2020, there has been no further significant deterioration. The only exception is Montenegro, where the situation worsened rapidly in 2020 and has yet to recover. Secondly, when we look at the changes in the last six years, it seems that the situation has been improving in Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia, whereas it has remained largely unchanged in Turkey.

To examine this data more closely, we need to look at the values of indicators of the economic dimension of youth participation in more detail²⁴.

An overview of the economic indicators shows that several employment challenges, which have been registered during the previous years, persists across participating countries. There is still a significant percentage of unemployed youth out of which many have been unemployed for longer than 12 months. Moreover, a substantial number of young people are not in employment nor education or training. Youth employment rate and participation rate are still below the EU average in most countries.

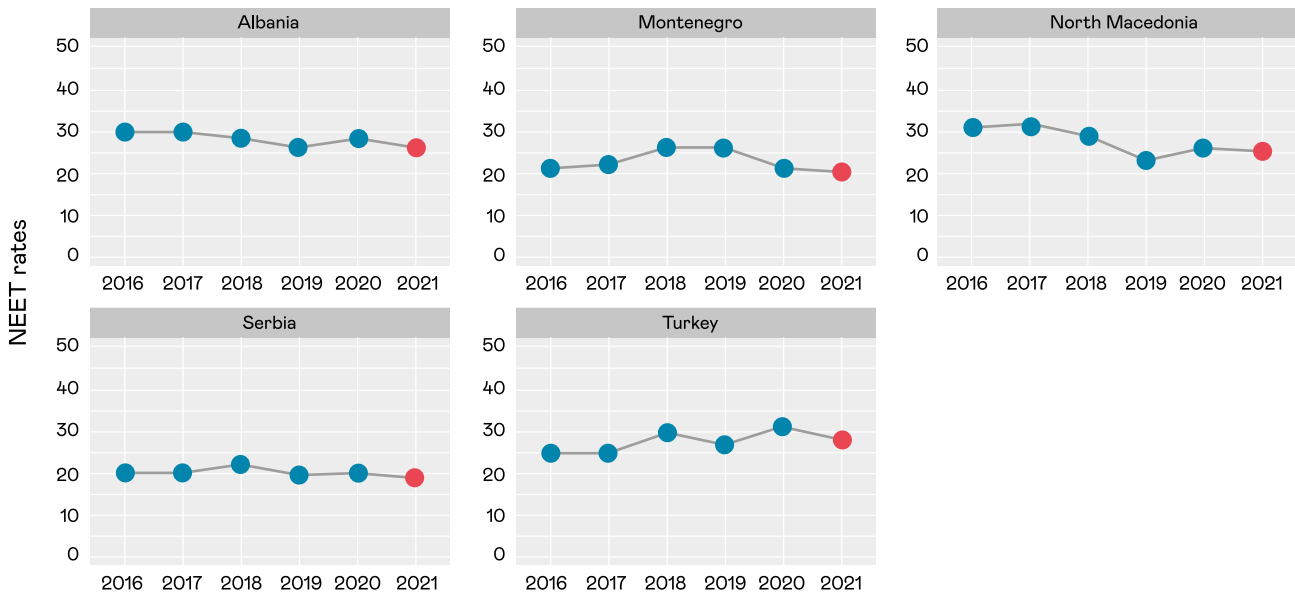
| Indicators | Albania | Montenegro | North Macedonia | Serbia | Turkey | EU-27 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|------------|-----------------|--------|--------|-------|
| NEET rate | 26.1 | 26.5 | 24.3 | 18.8 | 28.4 | 13.1 |
| Youth unemployment rate | 20.9 | 32.5 | 28.3 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 13.0 |
| Long-term youth unemployment rate | 11.6 | 18.3 | 20.0 | 7.1 | 27.2 | 3.5 |
| Youth labor force participation rate | 52.5 | 44.4 | 54.6 | 50.0 | 51.3 | 54.4 |
| Youth employment rate | 41.5 | 30.0 | 33.1 | 40.0 | 41.1 | 47.4 |

²⁴ The table with all data regarding economic participation is in the Annex 1 of the document.

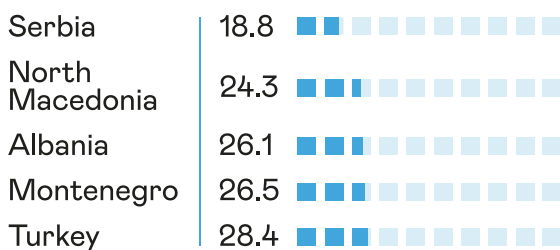
YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

In most of the participating countries one in four young people is neither in employment nor in education or training. In 2021, the percentages of young people neither in employment nor in education or training (neither formal nor non-formal) were high in all participating countries, ranging from 18.8% in Serbia to 28.4% in Turkey. In 2020 NEET rates increased compared to the previous year. However, in 2021 there was some evidence of progress. Nevertheless, these rates are still significantly higher compared to the EU-27 average of 13.1%, and they are still far from the target percentage of 9% set by the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan to be achieved by 2030.

How have NEET rates changes in the last 6 years?



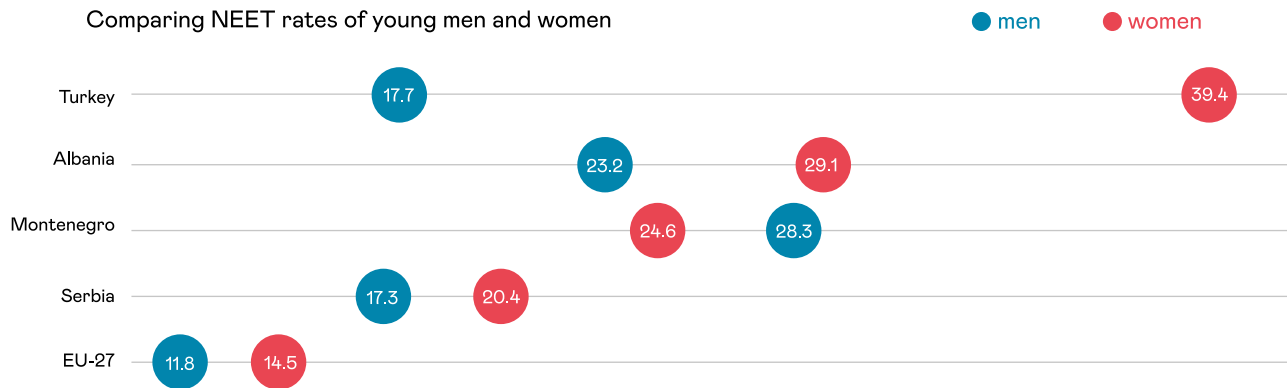
NEET RATE 2021



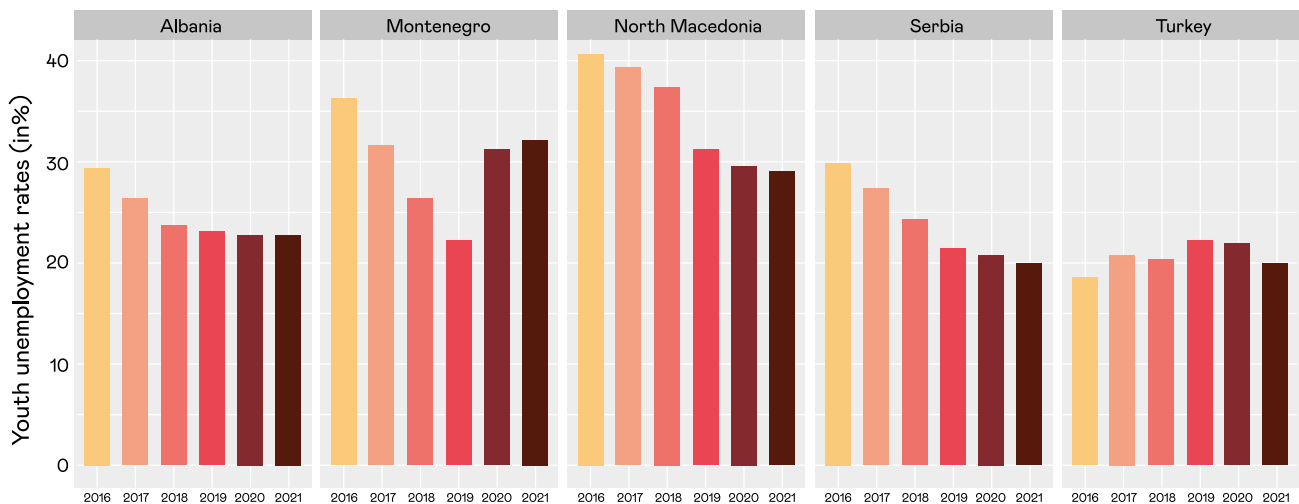
A closer look at the data, reveals that there are still significant gender gaps that need to be taken into account. NEET rates were higher for young women than for young men in all countries except Montenegro in 2021 (in previous years this was not the case with Montenegro). The difference is particularly prevalent in Turkey where it amounts to almost 22 percentage points. Gender-based division of labour and early marriage continues to be a vital problem for young women in Turkey, resulting in exclusion from employment opportunities.

25 https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights_en.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021



Youth unemployment continues to be a severe problem. The rates of youth unemployment have been the same or have slightly decreased compared to the previous year in Albania, Serbia and Turkey and they amount to about 20%. The unemployment rate of the population aged 15-29 in North Macedonia remained one of the highest one among all participating countries at 28%. Moreover, since there was a significant increase in the youth unemployment rate in Montenegro in 2020 which continued in 2021, the unemployment rate in Montenegro at 32.5% is now the highest one.



The unemployment rates were higher for young women than for young men in Turkey (25.1 compared to 17.1). In other countries, the differences were not prominent. In Albania, differences in unemployment rates of young men and women were a mere 0.9 percentage points, 1.7 in Montenegro and 2.1 in Serbia. The unemployment rate was higher for young men only in Montenegro.

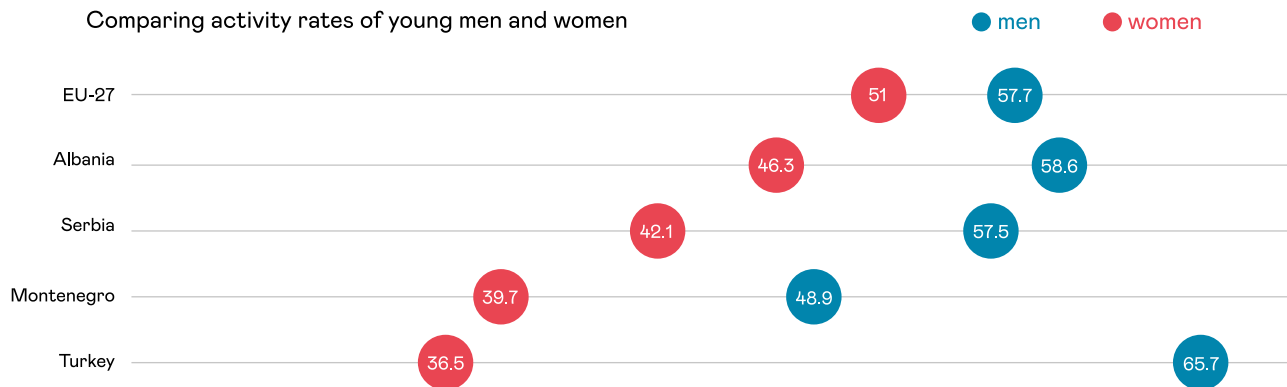
In 2021, youth employment rates varied from around 30% in North Macedonia and Montenegro to close to 41% in Albania, Serbia and Turkey which is still lower than the EU average of around 47%. Youth employment rates remained almost unchanged in Albania and North Macedonia, and decreased slightly in Montenegro. Contrary to that they have increased significantly in Serbia and Turkey by 4 percentage points and 3.2 percentage points respectively.

Many young people remain unemployed for longer than 12 months. The situation in most countries is worrying as almost every fifth young person among active young people has been unemployed longer than 12 months in North Macedonia and Montenegro and around one in ten young people in Albania. This rate is lowest in Serbia at around 7%, which is closest to the EU 27 average of 3.5%. Young men

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

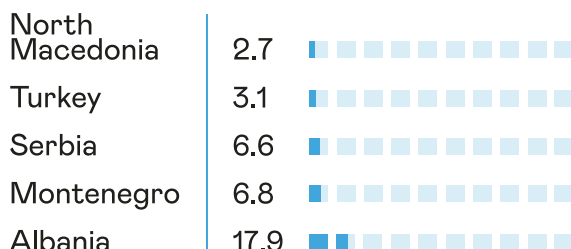
were more likely to be in long-term unemployment than young women in Montenegro, although the differences were not prominent, around 3%. In Albania and Serbia the long-term unemployment rates were almost the same between young men and women.

Striking differences in activity rates among young men and women persist. In all participating countries, except Montenegro, around 50% of young people aged 15-29 were active in the labour market. In Montenegro the activity rate started declining in 2020 and for two years in a row stands around 45%. In other countries, except Albania where almost no change was detected compared to the year before, activity rates started increasing. They now range from 50% in Serbia to 54.6% in North Macedonia, which is similar as the EU average of 54.4%. As in previous years, significant gender differences emerge. It is much more likely for young men to be active in the labour market than young women. The lowest difference was in Montenegro - around 9 percentage points and the highest one in Turkey where it was 29 percentage points. This means that only every third young woman in Turkey was active in the labour market.



Self-employment is still not the most frequent choice, especially for young women. Focusing on self-employment could be a part of a strategy to address the youth employment challenge. However, not many young people opt for it and this is particularly true for young women. In 2021, the percentage of self-employed young people varied from around 3% in North Macedonia and Turkey to approximately 18% in Albania. In all the countries, more young men than young women were self-employed. The most noticeable differences were registered in Montenegro where the share of self-employed young people among all employed young people was 7.2% for young men, whereas this rate for young women was close to zero. Similarly, in Albania the percentage of young self-employed men was 21.1% in contrast to 13.3% of young women.

SELF-EMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE



| | Albania | North Macedonia | Montenegro | Serbia | Turkey |
|--|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| % of self-employed young people among the total number of self-employed | 17.9% | 2.7% | 6.8%²⁶ | 6.6% | 3.1% |
| % of young people that started their own business with the state financial support out of the total number of young people who applied for the support | 2.6% | 18.9% | | 26.8% | |

When it comes to the percentage of young people who received subsidies to start their own business among all applicants, in Serbia, approximately 1 in 4 applicants and North Macedonia, approximately 1 in 5 applicants were successful in applying for state support. However, in Albania, it is registered that only 2.6% of applicants received subsidies. A possible explanation is that this indicator is calculated by considering the beneficiaries of the identified supporting programs (financing schemes) presented by some of the ministries. The calculation of this indicator continues to be partial because most of the data is still lacking. In Montenegro and Turkey it was also not possible to obtain the data for this indicator, similarly to the previous years.

²⁶ This percentage is calculated according to the different methodology and refers to share of self-employed young people in the population of employed young people.

Chapter 6

A closer look at youth social participation

ALTHOUGH EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AND COMPLETION OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IS GENERALLY NOT A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE, HIGH RISK OF POVERTY RATES AND THE LARGE PRESENCE OF YOUNG MEN IN PRISONS INDICATE POOR SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN THE REGION.

KEY FACTS AND FINDINGS

For the first time since the creation of the Youth Participation Index, a Social Participation Index was calculated for participating countries. This allows for an easy overview of youth social participation and comparison between participating countries, and future monitoring of trends in this area. **Based on the collected data, the social participation of young people in all participating countries is still not as good as it could be.** The highest registered value of this index was 81, which is lower than the target value of 100. Based on the collected data, the state of youth social participation is similar in Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, whereas the situation is somewhat more worrying in Turkey and Albania. It should be noted that there are still significant challenges in obtaining data related to the social participation of young people.

Dropout rates from secondary education do not show significant issues in need of addressing, possibly due to the methodology applied for calculating this indicator. **Early school leaving is a significant issue in Albania and Turkey.** In 2021, similar to previous years, **the rates of completing tertiary education were below 30% in all countries.** Among people aged 30–34 years, around 33% (in Albania and Turkey) and 40% (in North Macedonia) of the population had completed at least one level of tertiary education, indicating large differences among the countries in this respect.

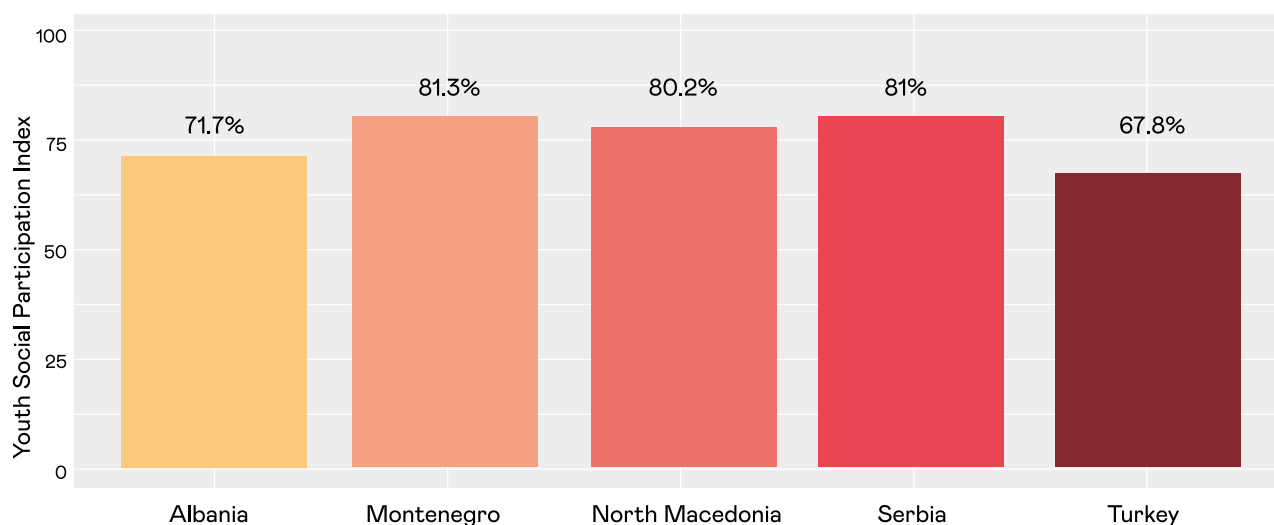
Still, **one in four young people was at risk of poverty** in 2021 in Serbia and Turkey. Similar numbers were registered in Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro in 2020. Around one-quarter of the population receiving financial support through the social protection system in Albania, Serbia and North Macedonia were young people.

Significant percentage of prisoners are young men. Approximately one-quarter of all prisoners were young people in Montenegro and Serbia, around 27% in North Macedonia and almost 37% in Albania.

Approximately **one in four people receiving financial support as a part of the social support system are young people**, in Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia. In 2021, data for this indicator became available for the first time for Albania and now only in Montenegro and Turkey does data regarding this aspect of social participation need to become available.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION INDEX

For the first time since the creation of the Youth Participation Index, a Social Participation Index was calculated. This is a pilot testing of methodology for constructing this index, as a basis for further development and refinement. Indicators that have been included in the calculation of the Social Participation Index are at-risk-of-poverty rate, percentage of youth in prison, the share of early dropouts from education and training for persons aged 18–24 years, percentage of the population aged 30–34 with tertiary education level and participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training (last 4 weeks).



Judging from the piloted Social Participation Index, two main conclusions arise.

1. Similarly, as in the case of political and economic participation, the social participation of young people in all participating countries is still not as good as it could be. The highest registered value of this index is 81, which is lower than the target value of 100.
2. Based on the collected data, the state of youth social participation is similar in Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, whereas the situation is somewhat more worrying in Turkey and Albania. This is mostly due to the higher share of early school dropouts, lower percentage of the population aged 30–34 with tertiary educational attainment level than in other countries and lower participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training.

To examine this data more closely, we need to look at the indicators of the social dimension of youth participation and their values in more detail²⁷.

²⁷ The table with all data regarding economic participation is in the Annex 1 of the document.

The participation of young people in formal and especially in non-formal education needs to be improved. Namely, judging from the data on dropouts from secondary education, the majority of countries do not have a significant problem. Namely, the dropout rate is below 2% in all the countries for which data was available (Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia). Looking at the indicator concerning early school dropouts (i.e. people aged 18–24 who had completed, at best, lower secondary education and who were not involved in further education or training)²⁸, it can be concluded that in North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia this percentage is lower than the the EU average of 9.7%. However, in Albania this percentage was around 16% and in Turkey around 27%, which points out to a worrying trend.

The targets set by the 2030 Agenda and many national policy documents, define that all young people should complete secondary education and that the number of people who have completed tertiary education should be increased.

When it comes to the statistics concerning tertiary education, the enrollment rate varied from only 16% in North Macedonia to 56% in Serbia. However, the largest percentage of young people graduating from tertiary education was below 20%. More young women enroll in tertiary education than men (for instance 66.5% compared to 46.5% in Serbia, and 48.5% compared to 40.5% in Turkey). The differences exist when it comes to the completion of tertiary education as well, although they are in general not as prominent.

As mentioned in the methodological note on data availability, when interpreting the rate of youth participation in education, it is important to highlight that there are some methodological differences regarding the indicators. Therefore, it was decided to also look at the population aged 30–34 with tertiary educational attainment level²⁹. Among people aged 30–34, between around 33% (Albania and Turkey) and around 40% (in North Macedonia) of the population had completed at least one level of tertiary education. This is slightly lower than EU average: just over two-fifths (41.6%) of the EU population have a tertiary level of education. Young women are more likely to attain a tertiary level of education. For instance, in Serbia around 35% of the population aged 30–34 attained tertiary education. However, this share was notably higher for young women (43.3%) than young men (27.7%).

| | Albania | Montenegro | North Macedonia | Serbia | Turkey |
|--|---------|------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Early school leaving | 15.60% | 3.60% | 5.70% | 6.30% | 26.70% |
| Percentage of population 30-34 with completed tertiary education | 33.20% | 38.40% | 39.70% | 35.30% | 33.10% |

²⁸ It should be noted that data for 2021 was available only for Serbia at the time of writing this report, thus for other countries data for 2020 was reported and used in calculation of the index.

²⁹ It should be noted that data for 2021 was available only for Serbia at the time of writing this report, thus for other countries data for 2020 was reported and used in calculation of the index.

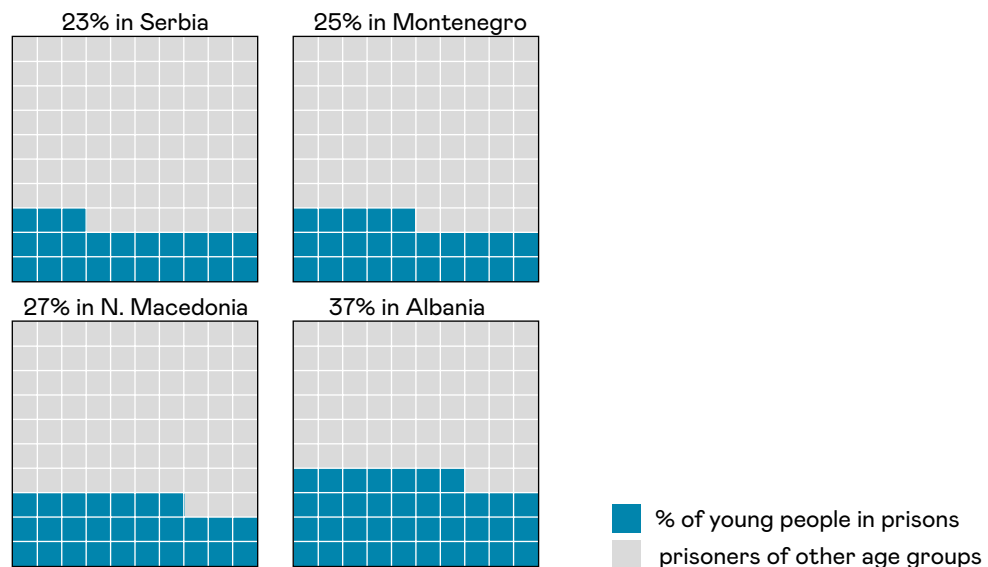
Note: The data for Serbia refers to 2021, and for other countries data refers to 2020, since the data for 2021 was still not available in the Eurostat database at the time of drafting this report

Recognizing the importance of non-formal education for young people, in 2019, researchers decided to include an additional indicator that could help shed some light on youth participation in this type of education and training. At the time of drafting this report only the data for Serbia was available. Only 4.4% of young people reported that they participated in non-formal education and training in the last 4 weeks. However, this is a significant increase compared to previous years, although it is still far from the EU average of 9.3%. For instance, in some countries such as Slovenia and Greece, this value is over 15%.

As mentioned in the methodological note, it was decided to include the indicator of participation of young people in formal and non-formal education in the last four weeks due to the completeness of the data. Participation rate in both types of education varies between 36% in Albania and 48% in Serbia.

One in four young people is at risk of poverty. Due to the timing of the SILC Survey results release, when this report was being drafted, it was only possible to obtain the data on the percentage of youth at risk of poverty for 2021 in Serbia and Turkey. In Serbia, after a period in which the value of this indicator decreased (from 29.6% in 2016 to 22.9% in 2020) in 2021 the situation worsened as 25.2% of young people were at risk of poverty. In Turkey, this value (according to Eurostat) was at 23.4%, similar to the previous year. In 2020, these rates were comparable in North Macedonia (25.9%), Albania (25.6%) and Montenegro (24.6%).

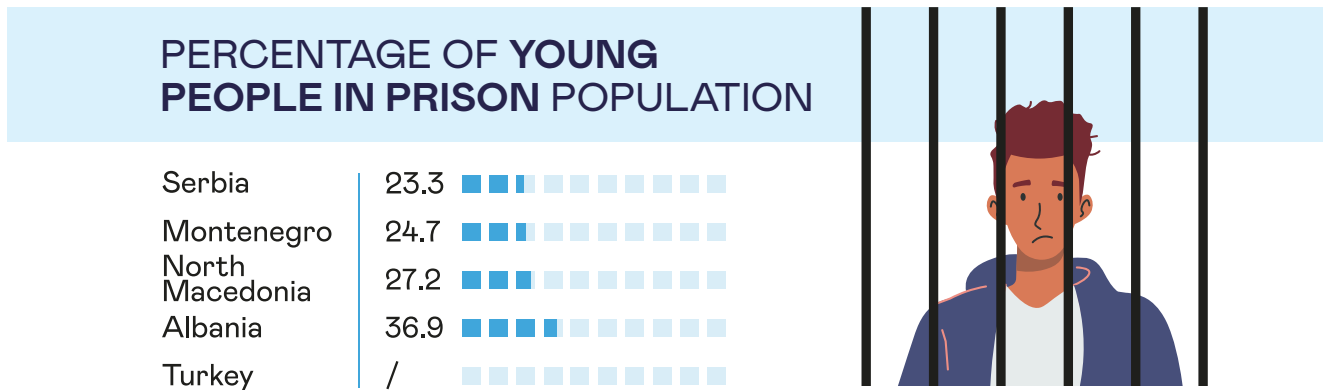
More than a quarter of prisoners are young people. In 2021, young people make up approximately one-quarter of all prisoners in Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia. In Albania a significant increase of 7 percentage points was registered compared to 2020 - in 2021 almost 37% of prisoners were young people. We could take a different approach by looking at the share of young people in the total population, which is between 17% and 21% for these countries. Based on this data it seems that young people make up a larger share of the prison population than the total population.



This indicator’s values for Turkey are still not available. However, it is possible to obtain data for the age group 18-40, which could provide an approximate picture of the situation although it is not comparable with other countries. The percentage of prisoners in this age group was 47%. There are no comparable data available at the EU level regarding the age distribution of prisoners. However, there are data on the average age of the population in penal institutions³⁰, which was around 36 in all participating countries except for Turkey, where it was around 39.

When it comes to data on incarcerated young people, it should be noted that for all countries where this data is available, there is a major difference in the number of imprisoned young men compared to young women. The percentage of young women in prison varied from as little as 0.4% in Albania to 1.9% in Turkey.

Approximately one in four people who receive financial support as a part of the social support system are young, in Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia. In 2020, data for this indicator was available for the first time for North Macedonia, and in 2021 for Albania, which is significant progress in data collection. Now only in Montenegro and Turkey data regarding this aspect of social participation need to become available.



³⁰ Populations in penal institutions by age on 31st January 2021, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/prison/space>

Chapter 7

Youth participation – a way forward

The sixth year of collecting data regarding youth participation in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey revealed many pressing challenges concerning the position of young people in society. Underrepresentation in political life, lack of employment as well as education and training, staying unemployed for a long time and being at risk of poverty are a reality for many young people in the region. Although the situation has somewhat improved in some countries, over the years there has not been major progress. Thus, urgent action is needed to address the identified issues. Recommendations based on the collected data will be presented in two areas: addressing the lack of data and improving youth participation in the region.



I RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE ABSENCE OF YOUTH-SENSITIVE DATA

Ensuring access to youth-specific data and changing the practices of institutions in this regard is vital in planning measures to improve youth participation. A set of recommendations to address key challenges concerning the lack of youth-specific data is proposed in the following text. They include recommendations from previous years which have still not been implemented, as well as new recommendations based on the changes in the accessibility of data in this year and observed trends.

The institutions need to start collecting youth-sensitive data in the field of economic, social, and political participation for the category of youth as it is legally defined.

Despite evident progress throughout the years, it is clear that national statistical agencies and other relevant authorities need to increase their effort to collect more youth-specific data. Systematically collected high-quality data are needed to reach informed policies and support measures for youth, especially vulnerable groups of young people. Specifically, it can be recommended that:

- Public authorities in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey implement the reforms in the area of statistics following the recommendations in the European Commission's reports³¹.
- Data related to the **share of young people receiving financial support through the social protection system** compared to the total number of people receiving this type of support, should be monitored and regularly reported. Throughout the years of preparing the Index, this kind of data has become available firstly in Serbia, then North Macedonia, and this year from Albania as well. Thus, two additional recommendations can be made: 1) Ministry or other national institution in charge of data on beneficiaries within the social protection system in Montenegro and Turkey should disaggregate data by age and start analyzing the number of young people receiving financial support ; 2) In Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia data for this indicator should be regularly produced and published.
- Data on **young people that started their own businesses with the financial support of the state** compared to all young people that applied for this support should be regularly reported. Since countries implement policy measures aimed at increasing self-employment, this indicator would be useful for gaining insight into the success rates that young people have when applying for subsidies, and planning the improvement of the support systems. It is recommended that: 1) Institutions in charge of providing this type of financial support in Montenegro and Turkey start collecting the data on young people who apply for the subsidies; 2) In Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia data for this indicator should be regularly produced and published.
- Data on **young people in prisons** compared to the total population of people in prisons should become available in Turkey for the age group 15-29, and continue to be readily available in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.
- Data on **youth participation in non-formal education and training** needs to be regularly collected by national statistical offices in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

³¹ More information on website: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/strategy-and-reports_en.

Data concerning the youth should be easily accessible.

In some cases, the lack of publicly available youth-sensitive data meant that data had to be collected through official requests to institutions, which sometimes required payment. In many instances, additional desk research and efforts by researchers were needed to collect the necessary data. Also, some of the publicly available data, was still difficult to find on official websites (especially for the age group 15-29) and was not presented in a youth-friendly manner. This means that young people and other stakeholders face significant difficulties when trying to obtain the statistics they need for making informed decisions. Thus, the recommendation is that data concerning youth should be easily accessible:

- **Public statistical offices should dedicate a section to collect statistics concerning young people on their websites.** This would make it easier for anyone interested in youth-sensitive data, from policymakers to youth organizations and young people themselves, to obtain it. Since all countries have national policies relevant to youth, in this way all those involved have direct access to relevant data. This also sends a clear message that statistics on youth are important and need to be taken into account.

An example of a section collecting statistics from a range of other domains on which data is available segregated by age can be found on the Eurostat website: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth>.

This process can also be connected with the monitoring of the achievement of targets set by the Agenda 2030 concerning youth. The example of the data visualization platform “Youth SDG Dashboard” used to track youth indicators across different targets can be found on the website: <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-sdg-dashboard/>.

In Albania, the National Programme for Official Statistics 2022–2026 of Albania establishes the requirement to report robust indicators on youth (age 15–29 years) and to achieve this a dashboard to provide real-time data on socio-demographic indicators has been designed: www.instat.gov.al/en/children-and-youth-official-statistics/.

Another good practice example is a database available at the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (<https://data.stat.gov.rs/>). In the database, for indicators related to the labour market, data is available for age groups 15-24, 15-29 and 15-30.

- **The release of datasets obtained via publicly supported research studies involving youth in an open format, as open data, should be strongly encouraged by national institutions.** This is important as it allows researchers to explore available data and conduct secondary analyses. Young people themselves could be encouraged to carry out youth research using these datasets, and to participate in the creation of data-informed youth policies.
- **Data on young people holding political positions should be easily available on the official websites of national parliaments.** The age of all of the Members of Parliament should be available on the websites and the number of MPs under thirty should be clearly communicated. The websites need to be regularly updated.
- **Institutions in charge of youth at the national level need to have data on youth structures at the local level.** In the process of Index preparation, this type of data is collected by contacting municipalities or through desk research. However national institutions must have this type of data readily available to plan adequate policy measures.

II RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE LOW LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Youth participation matters and the issue of youth disengagement continues to be a major problem faced not only by the Western Balkan region and Turkey but also by modern democracies in the EU³². Based on the results of the YPI, the opportunities for participation of young people in the decision-making process in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey need to be improved.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Governments, parliaments, political parties and youth organizations in the region should apply strategies to improve youth access to political positions.

Young people continue to be vastly underrepresented in national parliaments and other political positions such as mayors, deputy ministers or ministers. The situation regarding their representation in political life has not improved over the years, creating a necessity for urgent action. According to the report on global youth participation in parliaments³³, improving youth representation can strengthen the legitimacy of parliament, achieve greater fairness in access to political decision-making, contribute to better policy making and potentially help young people uninterested in politics to trust political institutions again.

32 Kitanova, M. (2019). Youth political participation in the EU: evidence from a cross-national analysis, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13676261.2019.1636951>.

33 Inter-Parliamentary Union (2019). Youth participation in national parliaments, <https://www.ipu.org/our-impact/youth-empowerment>

Governments, parliaments, political parties and youth organizations should adopt strategies to raise the number of young people in political positions, especially number of MPs, which can include the following:

- **Raising awareness about the importance of youth participation in politics;**
- **Introducing youth quotas, i.e. reserving seats in parliaments to ensure youth presence;**
- **Establishing youth caucuses in national parliaments to promote youth issues in public policy.**

Since some of the countries are facing elections in the upcoming period, this is an opportunity to advocate for the greater presence of young people in political positions.

Local authorities must improve the use of online tools to improve communication with young people.

Governments, parliaments and municipalities should strive towards ensuring the use of online tools for providing information, as a precondition for establishing communication between policy-makers and young people and meaningful youth political participation. Bearing in mind that young people mostly use social networks as channels of communication, all relevant institutions must have official websites, as well as Facebook and Twitter accounts. The YPI 2021 shows that this is still not the case in all participating countries. The use of online tools at the local level, by municipalities, needs to be significantly improved in Albania and North Macedonia.

Youth institutional structures (councils/parliaments/unions) which ensure the participation of young people in the decision-making process must be established in Turkey at the national level and in a greater number of municipalities in all participating countries.

Despite significant efforts, Turkey has still not developed mechanisms for involving young people in the decision-making process at the national level in the form of youth structures. Examples of other participating countries which have established this mechanism, show that this can be achieved, so youth organizations need to continue their advocacy efforts in this direction.

At the same time, the percentage of municipalities that have active youth structures (based on their websites and social network pages) is below 50% in all countries except Serbia. It is necessary to advocate for the opportunity to build youth councils, parliaments and unions to ensure the participation of young people in the decision-making process at the national and local levels. Moreover, it might be useful for youth organizations to:

- **Enhance the cooperation of municipalities for the creation of these structures;**
- **Prepare relevant resources and tools including a review of best practices to facilitate and unify the way these structures are organized and how they function in all municipalities.**

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING YOUTH ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Urgent measures for reducing youth unemployment and the number of young people without a job or outside of education need to be implemented in all countries. Gender differences in this area need to be addressed.

The situation concerning indicators of the position of young people in the labour market has not significantly changed in that, even though there is some evidence of progress in certain countries, the situation in the region is still worrying and lagging behind many other EU countries:

- **Although in most countries, after a period of stagnation or decline in the value of indicators of the position of young people in the labour market with the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, there was no further significant deterioration, public institutions should monitor the long-term consequences of the pandemic on youth employment and implement measures such as improving active labour market policies and training and retraining programs.**
- **In Montenegro, the situation worsened rapidly in 2020 and is yet to recover, so a specific set of measures needs to be implemented.**
- **Significant gender differences at the labour market persist, especially concerning activity rates, which needs to be addressed, especially in Turkey where differences are most prominent, but also in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia.**

In all countries it can be recommended to:

- **Use the benefits of cooperation between public institutions and youth organizations, which can contribute to reaching young people in vulnerable situations and share information on existing measures;**
- **Include young people and youth organizations in the process of creating and evaluating these measures.**

Entrepreneurship of young people, especially young women, should be stimulated and promoted, by providing adequate and continuing (administrative, legal, technical, mentorship) assistance and (financial) support.

Data on youth entrepreneurship suggest that not only do a relatively small number of young people choose self-employment as an option but also that those who choose it may lack adequate support. This was the case with some of the countries in this year's report, but it is also worrying that in Montenegro and Turkey data on the percentage of young people who received subsidies to start their own business among all applicants still cannot be obtained. As for all other issues, it is necessary to have quality data to plan adequate measures. In preparing policy responses concerning youth entrepreneurship special attention must be given to young women since they opt for self-employment to a much lesser degree than young men.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING YOUTH SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Participation of young people in non-formal education and training should be encouraged; early school leaving in Albania and Turkey should be addressed.

Participation of young people in non-formal education and training is quite low, which needs to be addressed by youth policies in each of the countries. Many civil society organizations are engaged in the provision of this type of education and could offer valuable insights for potentially effective measures.

Although the situation concerning early school leaving is not severe in the majority of participating countries, this is not the case with Albania and Turkey, which needs to be recognized through youth policies. Even though in other countries dropout from secondary education and the percentage of early school leavers is not high, this still needs to be addressed as young people from vulnerable groups are usually at much greater risk of not completing primary and secondary education.

Public institutions should commission research to develop new support measures for specific vulnerable groups.

The alarming number of young people at risk of poverty, leads to the conclusion that it is necessary to improve the situation of young people in vulnerable positions as soon as possible. In each of the countries, one in every four young people is at risk of poverty. At the same time, information on young people in social welfare is lacking in the majority of countries, making it difficult to completely understand the situation. Many young men are in prison. Public authorities in Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey should commission research studies to better understand the situation of this vulnerable group of young people, the factors contributing to this situation and policy measures that can be effective. It can be recommended that this research is conducted by young researchers engaged via public call.

One example of using the data to better understand the situation and inform policy decisions is the publishing of youth justice annual statistics for England and Wales: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2020-to-2021> Data is presented in a clear and informative way, in multiple formats, including infographics. Open data is made available.

Annex 1

Methodological notes

CORRIGENDUM: In preparation for the YPI a mistake in calculating the targeted Youth Participation Index, as well as indices of youth economic and political participation has been noticed, making it impossible to compare indices calculated for each of the countries. In this report, a new methodology was applied and all indices were recalculated.

In 2016, the year when the YPI was launched, a set of indicators for inclusion in the first Youth Participation Index was chosen based on an analytical process comprising extensive desk research and expert consultations. Over the years they have been slightly changed and there are currently 25 indicators in total across three domains of youth participation in the Index, with the indicators and sources listed in the table below.

| ASPECT OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION | INDEX INDICATOR | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|
| POLITICAL PARTICIPATION | Young ministers in Government M/F | The percentage of young ministers in government calculated as the percentage of young ministers aged under the age of 29 / total number of ministers. | The official website of Government |
| | Young deputy ministers in government M/F | The percentage of young deputy ministers in government is calculated as percentage of deputy ministers under the age of 29 / total number of deputy ministries. | The official website of the Government |
| | Young MPs in the parliament M/F | The percentage of young MPs in Parliament is calculated as the percentage of MPs under the age of 29 /total number of MPs. | The official website of the National Parliament |
| | Young mayors M/F | The percentage of young mayors is calculated as the percentage of majors under the age of 29 /total number of majors. | State Commission of Elections or the official websites of Municipalities |
| | On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of the government and the parliament | Percentage of ministries and parliaments that have online tools for information and participation in decision making (website, Facebook page or Twitter) / total number of ministries and parliament. | Social network sites of Ministries/The Parliament |
| | Online tools for information and participation in decision making of municipalities | The percentage of municipalities that have online tools for information and participation in decision making (websites, Facebook page, Twitter) | Social network sites of municipalities |
| | Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) on a national level | Yes/No | Ministry or other national institution in charge of Youth |
| | Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) on a local level | Yes /No If yes – also the percentage of municipalities that have youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) | Municipalities |

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|
| ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION | NEET rate | NEET rate is the percentage of the population aged 15-29 who is not employed and not involved in further education or training. | National Statistical Office (Labour Force Survey) |
| | Youth unemployment rate | The youth unemployment rate is the unemployment rate of people aged 15 - 29 as a percentage of the economically active population of the same age (the total number of people employed and unemployed). | National Statistical Office (Labour Force Survey) |
| | The long-term youth unemployment rate | The long-term youth unemployment rate is the share of unemployed persons aged 15-29 for one year or more in the active population in the labour market of the same age. | National Statistical Office (Labour Force Survey) |
| | Youth labour force participation rate | The participation rates the number of persons aged 15-29 in the labour force as a percentage of the total population of the same age. | National Statistical Office (Labour Force Survey) |
| | Youth Employment rate | The number of employed persons aged 15-29 as a percentage of the total population 15-29. | National Statistical Office (Labour Force Survey) |
| | Young people that started their own businesses with the financial support of state | The percentage of persons aged 15-29 who received subsidies among those who have applied. | National institution in charge of giving subsidies. |
| | Self-employed young people | The share of self-employed persons aged 15-29 as a percentage of the total self-employed population 15+ | National Statistical Office (Labour Force Survey) |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| SOCIAL PARTICIPATION | Young people at risk of poverty (at-risk-of-poverty rate) | The share of people aged 16-29 with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfer) below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers. | National Statistical Office (Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC)) |
| | Young people in prisons | The number of persons aged 15-29 in prisons as a percentage of the total number of people in prisons. | National institution in charge |
| | Young people part of social welfare system | The number of persons aged 15-29 in who receive financial support in the Social Protection System as a percentage of the total number of people receiving this support. | Ministry in charge of Social Welfare |
| | Dropout from secondary education | The percentage of enrolled students in secondary education as a share of the total number of graduated students from secondary education | National Statistical Office |
| | Young people enrolled in tertiary education | The percentage of young people enrolled in tertiary education as a share of the total number of young people | National Statistical Office |
| | Young people graduated from tertiary education | The percentage of young people graduated from tertiary education as a share of the total number of enrolled young people | National Statistical Office |
| | Participation rate in non-formal education and training (last 4 weeks) | The share of people aged 15 to 29 who had participated in non-formal education or training in the last 4 weeks. | National Statistical Office (Labour Force Survey) |
| | Share of early leavers from education and training, persons aged 18-24 years | Early leavers are defined as individuals aged 18-24 who have completed at most a lower secondary education and were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the labour force survey. | Eurostat |
| | Population aged 30-34 with tertiary educational attainment level | The share of the population aged 30-34 years who have completed university or university-like (tertiary-level) education. | Eurostat |
| | Participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training (last 4 weeks) | The share of people aged 15 to 29 who had participated in formal or non-formal education or training in the last 4 weeks. | National Statistical Office (Labour Force Survey) |

When interpreting the Index the following methodological guidelines should be taken into account:

1. Data on the use of online tools for information and participation in decision-making of municipalities and the existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) on a local level in Turkey is collected on a sample of municipalities unlike in other countries where it was gathered for all municipalities;
2. In the cases of the following indicators data was not available for 2021 and thus values registered in 2020 were used in index calculation: share of early leavers from education and training, the population aged 30-34 with tertiary education attainment level and participation rate in formal and informal education and training for Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Turkey; data on long-term unemployment for Turkey, data on at risk of poverty rate for Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia.
3. Indicators on young people who started their own businesses with the financial support of the state and self-employed young people were not used in the calculation of the Index due to a large amount of missing data and differing methodologies in collecting data.
4. Indicators on young people within a social protection system, dropouts from secondary education, young people enrolled in tertiary education, young people who graduated from tertiary education and participation rate in non-formal education and training (last 4 weeks) were not used in the calculation of Index due to a large amount of missing data and differing methodologies in collecting data.
5. In calculating the economic participation index for the period 2016-2020 the same target values were used as when calculating the value of the index in 2021. The target values are based on the data collected by Eurostat in 2021.
6. It should be noted that from the year 2021 onwards the new methodology of the European Union LFS has been in force, which means that the data from the previous years is not completely comparable with data gathered from 2021. Member States and Eurostat are producing break-corrected series to ensure data comparability over time, which will be gradually available on the Eurostat website.

Annex 2

Data collected in the process of preparing this report 2016-2021 for each of the participating countries

| POLITICAL PARTICIPATION | COUNTRY | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Young ministers in Government | Albania | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| | Montenegro | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| | North Macedonia | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| | Serbia | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| | Turkey | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Young deputy ministers in Government | Albania | 0.0% | 3% | 3.0% | 7.0% | 3.0% | 3.0% |
| | Montenegro | 4.4% | 5.0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| | North Macedonia | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| | Serbia | 1.0% | 1.0% | 5.0% | 5.0% | 1.0% | 1.6% |
| | Turkey | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Young MPs in the parliament | Albania | 2.1% | 4.91% | 4.9% | 4.0% | 4.0% | 2.1% |
| | Montenegro | 1.2% | 6.0% | 8.6% | 2.5% | 4.9% | 4.9% |
| | North Macedonia | 8.3% | 1.7% | 1.2% | 3.3% | 1.6% | 1.7% |
| | Serbia | 1.2% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 7.6% | 5.2% |
| | Turkey | 0.9% | 0.9% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 0.85% | 0.85% |
| Young mayors | Albania | 6.0% | 6.0% | 6.0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| | Montenegro | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| | North Macedonia | 1.3% | 1.3% | 0.8% | 0% | 0% | 1.3% |
| | Serbia | 2.5% | 2.43% | 0.60% | 0.60% | 1.80% | 0.62% |
| | Turkey | 0.29% | 0.29% | / | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Online tools for information and participation in the decision-making process of the government and parliament institutions | Albania | 95.00% | 91% | 93.3% | 79.3% | 98.0% | 94.0% |
| | Montenegro | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | North Macedonia | 72.5% | 94.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 81.2% | 87.0% |
| | Serbia | 68.0% | 78.55% | 77.50% | 91.25% | 92.14% | 86.90% |
| | Turkey | 61.80% | 61.80% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Online tools for information and participation in the decision-making process with municipalities | Albania | 52.0% | 66% | 67.2% | 66.0% | 74.0% | 72.1% |
| | Montenegro | 96.0% | 99.0% | 99.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | North Macedonia | 90.0% | 90.0% | 96.8% | 69.5% | 71.6% | 66.2% |
| | Serbia | 61.0% | 75% | 84.75% | 83.18% | 85.20% | 81.20% |
| | Turkey | 90.00% | 90.00% | | | 99.57% | 100.0% |
| Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on a national level | Albania | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| | Montenegro | 100.0% | 99.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | North Macedonia | 100.0% | 90.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | Serbia | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | Turkey | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on a local level | Albania | 18.03% | 34.6% | 49.0% | 57.4% | 46.0% | 43.0% |
| | Montenegro | 22.0% | 23.0% | 41.0% | 45.0% | 41.0% | 37.5% |
| | North Macedonia | 78.5% | 78.5% | 77.0% | 53.0% | 15.0% | 30.0% |
| | Serbia | 77.5% | 85.9% | 69.7% | 67.9% | 67.3% | 70.4% |
| | Turkey | | | | | 20.99% | 17.3% |

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

| ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION | COUNTRY | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------|
| NEET rate | Albania | 30.0% | 29.70% | 28.6% | 26.6% | 27.9% | 26.1% |
| | Montenegro | 22.3% | 21.4% | 21.0% | 21.3% | 26.6% | 26.5% |
| | North Macedonia | 31.3% | 31.1% | 29.8% | 24.5% | 26.2% | 24.3% |
| | Serbia | 22.3% | 21.70% | 20.10% | 19% | 20% | 18.8% |
| | Turkey | 27.8% | 27.5% | 27.6% | 29.5% | 32% | 28.4% |
| Youth unemployment rate | Albania | 29.8% | 25.9% | 23.1% | 21.5% | 20.9% | 20.9% |
| | Montenegro | 28.8% | 26.5% | 26.0% | 22.3% | 30.7% | 32.5% |
| | North Macedonia | 40.6% | 39.2% | 37.0% | 30.5% | 29.6% | 28.3% |
| | Serbia | 29.8% | 26.70% | 24.50% | 21.50% | 20.5% | 20% |
| | Turkey | 17.2% | 17.7% | 17.8% | 22% | 21.7% | 20% |
| Long-term youth unemployment rate | Albania | 16.7% | 13.8% | 13.1% | 11.5% | 11.4% | 11.6% |
| | Montenegro | 18.7% | 18.5% | 15.7% | 13.8% | 17.4% | 18.3% |
| | North Macedonia | 29.5% | 28.9% | 26.3% | 21.1% | 21.1% | 20% |
| | Serbia | 15% | 11.4% | 10.1% | 8.7% | 7.6% | 6.3% |
| | Turkey | 3.2% | 3.4% | 3.4% | 4.6% | 4.9% | 27.2%* ³⁴ |
| Youth labor force participation rate | Albania | 45.7% | 45.8% | 50.1% | 52.5% | 52.1% | 52.5% |
| | Montenegro | 49.5% | 48.7% | 48.5% | 51.1% | 45.1% | 44.4% |
| | North Macedonia | 48.1% | 49.7% | 49.1% | 49.4% | 47.6% | 54.6% |
| | Serbia | 47% | 47.2% | 47.7% | 46.5% | 44.8% | 50% |
| | Turkey | 51.3% | 52.3% | 52.7% | 53.2% | 48.50% | 51.3% |
| Youth employment rate | Albania | 32.4% | 33.8% | 38.5% | 41.2% | 41.2% | 41.5% |
| | Montenegro | 35.2% | 35.8% | 35.9% | 39.7% | 31.3% | 30.0% |
| | North Macedonia | 28.6% | 30.2% | 30.9% | 34.4% | 33.5% | 33.1% |
| | Serbia | 33.2% | 34.9% | 36.4% | 36.90% | 36% | 40% |
| | Turkey | 42.5% | 43% | 43.3% | 41.50% | 37.9% | 41.1% |
| Young people started their own business with financial support of the state | Albania | 54.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 26.0% | 3.0% | 2.6% |
| | Montenegro | | | | | | |
| | North Macedonia | 47.7% | 0.0% | 13.7% | 22.3% | 23% | 18.9% |
| | Serbia | 23.3% | 19.5% | 20.5% | 24.35% | 26.0% | 28.8% |
| | Turkey | 22.62% | | | | | |
| Self-employed young people | Albania | 29.00% | 18.3% | 0.9% | 7.8% | 18.5% | 17.9% |
| | Montenegro | 9.0% | 8.4% | 5.8% | 4.0% | 8.6% | 6.8%* ³⁵ |
| | North Macedonia | 6.0% | 7.3% | | 1.6% | 0.4% | 2.7% |
| | Serbia | 0.6% | 2.76% | 6.8% | 6.87% | 6.0% | 6.6% |
| | Turkey | | | | 2.8% | 6.65% | 3.1% |

³⁴ This data is received by official institutions, however, it differs from values registered by Eurostat in previous years.

³⁵ This data is collected using a different methodologies, comparing self-employed young people with the total number of employed young people.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX 2021

| SOCIAL PARTICIPATION | COUNTRY | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|--|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Young people at risk of poverty | Albania | | 25.7% | 26% | 26.2% | 24.4% | |
| | Montenegro | 27.9% | 26.2% | | | 26.6% | |
| | North Macedonia | 23.9% | 25% | 25.2% | 24.6% | 24.4% | |
| | Serbia | 29.6% | 27.2% | 26% | 24.4% | 22.9% | 25.2% |
| | Turkey | 23.10% | 21.9% | 21.7% | 22.1% | 23.2% | 23.4% |
| Young people in prisons | Albania | 36.4% | 46.00% | 47.7% | 34.8% | 30.0% | 36.9% |
| | Montenegro | 31.1% | 33.2% | 52.2% | | 23.2% | 24.7% |
| | North Macedonia | 0.20% | | 31.4% | 25.3% | 27.8% | 27.2% |
| | Serbia | 32.70% | 27.7% | 26.5% | 24.9% | 25.9% | 23.3% |
| | Turkey | 63.00% | | | | 65.14% | 48% |
| Young people part of the social welfare system | Albania | | | | | | 24.3% |
| | Montenegro | | | | | | |
| | North Macedonia | | | | | 29.7% | 28.63% |
| | Serbia | 18.97% | 18.16% | 18.1% | | 24.0% | 22.3% |
| | Turkey | | | | | | |
| Dropout from secondary education | Albania | 3.7% | 3.35% | 3.2% | 2.6% | 1.8% | 1.5% |
| | Montenegro | 5.50% | 5.4% | 4.6% | 5.0% | 2.3% | |
| | North Macedonia | | 2.3% | 1.40% | 0.5% | 0.6% | 16% |
| | Serbia | 1.10% | 1.30% | 1.40% | 1.10% | 0.80% | 0.81% |
| | Turkey | | | | 28.7%* | 26.70%* ³⁶ | |
| Young people enrolled in tertiary education | Albania | 22.4% | 21.4% | 22.5% | 21.6% | 20.9% | 21.5% ³⁷ |
| | Montenegro | 33.9% | 34.8% | 33% | 54.2% | 32.3% | 43.0% |
| | North Macedonia | | 28.9% | 14.50% | 38.8% | 13.4% | 13.4% |
| | Serbia | 59.70% | 54.20% | 54.70% | 54.70% | 54.70% | 56.20% |
| | Turkey | 40.53% | 42.43% | 45.60% | 44.10% | 43.40% | 44.4% |
| Young people graduated from tertiary education | Albania | 21.48% | 25.19% | 26% | 26.7% | 25.0% | 26% |
| | Montenegro | 12.86% | 14.51% | 14.59% | | 45.43% | 16.5% |
| | North Macedonia | | 11.50% | 16.50% | 15.2% | 11.9% | 28.6% |
| | Serbia | 20.00% | 19.70% | 18.10% | 18.13% | 17.60% | 17.10% |
| | Turkey | | | 9.57% | | 10.56% | 12% |
| Self-employed young people | Albania | | | | | | |
| | Montenegro | | | 2.8% | 1.30% | | |
| | North Macedonia | 2.3% | 1.9% | 2.0% | 2.8% | 1.9% | |
| | Serbia | 3% | 2.8% | 2.3% | 2.40% | 1.3% | 4.4% |
| | Turkey | 5.3% | 5.5% | 6.9% | 6.50% | 4.4% | |

36 This data refers to early school leavers

37 This data refers to people aged 18-29 enrolled in tertiary education compared to total number of young people aged 18-29.



YOUTH PARTICIPATION INDEX

MONITORING REPORT OF
POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH 2021



Funded by
the European Union

This publication was published within the project "WB&T for EmploYouth", funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.