



Youth Policy in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation



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Youth Policy in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation

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Table of Selected Abbreviations

CDEJ – European Steering Committee for Youth

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States

CoE – Council of Europe

EAEU – Eurasian Economic Union

EaP – Eastern Partnership

EKCYP – European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

NGOs – non-governmental organisations

PEYR – Pool of European Youth Researchers

SALTO EECA – Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities in Eastern Europe and Caucasus

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

USAID – United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

In 2018 the Foundation for the Development of the Education System together with the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs published the 1st edition of *Youth Policy in Eastern Partnership countries*. Three years later, on the eve of the new EU financial perspective 2021–2027 and the new programmes: Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps for young people, we are introducing its updated and extended edition.

In 2009, Finn Yrjar Denstad wrote: “From Baku to Barcelona and from Madrid to Moscow, we can find examples of joint efforts to improve the lives of young people and involve them at all levels of decision making on issues that have an impact on them. Across the continent, governments are developing and revising national youth strategies and action plans on youth policy at an unprecedented pace” (Denstad 2009).

Over the course of the past decade, there has been significant progress in youth policy development in the EU as well as in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Substantial youth and education packages have been established at national and EU level and anti-crisis and unemployment measures have been introduced both at EU level and in many countries both within the EU and in its neighbourhood.

In recent years, youth and youth policy also benefited from increased international support mechanisms, such as the Erasmus+ Programme, European Solidarity Corps or eTwinning+, reaching far beyond the borders of the European Union. Evidence-based policy became more and more prominent and recognised and the needs and challenges faced by young people from EU neighbouring countries are in the policy focus of many national institutions and international organisations.

In this book, the authors take a closer look at the latest youth policy developments in the European Union’s eastern neighbours including Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, as well as the Russian

Federation. The information presented in this publication reflects the state of affairs as of December 2020.

Youth policy characteristics

Youth policy is a strategy implemented by public authorities with a view to providing young people with opportunities and experiences that support their successful integration into society and enable them to be active and responsible members of their societies, as well as agents of change (Council of Europe CM/Rec(2015)3). A national youth policy is a government's commitment and practice towards ensuring good living conditions and opportunities for the young population of a country (Denstad 2009). In most countries, youth policy is an inter-ministerial policy and calls for the coordinated activities of several ministries, dealing with e.g. education, science, culture, social matters, employment or health.

The basic aim of any youth policy is to create suitable conditions for young people to operate in, ensuring the right to education or participation in political, cultural and social life on equal terms with other social groups. Thanks to an effective youth policy, young people have the opportunity to become citizens with full rights, who play an active role in the society and in shaping the labour market.

In order to be efficient and effective, youth policy should encompass five components (Williamson 2002):

- » **coverage** – with reference to geographical area, social groups and policy domains;
- » **capacity** – the role and relationship of government and youth non-governmental organisations;
- » **competence** – with reference to training and qualifications;
- » **co-operation, coordination and coherence** – between ministries, youth non-governmental organisations, educational institutions and other relevant stakeholders;
- » **cost** – including financial and human resources.

Taking into account the above-mentioned components, youth policy should depart from a clear definition of “youth” as a separate age group. It is crucial to create the framework and boundaries of such policy and to estimate the number of the target groups (and possible sub-groups, such as for instance youth from rural and urban areas, youth at the risk of social exclusion, young unemployed, young people with disabilities) and in consequence, assign appropriate financial and administrative resources. Definitions and age scopes of “youth” can differ from country to country, nonetheless youth policy should encompass and target all young people.

Youth affairs and youth policy are usually coordinated by a government body designated to youth policy management – usually a ministry. Given the large scope of state activities dedicated to young people (i.e. education at all levels, employment, social policy, youth work, health and well-being to name just the most important ones) cross-sectoral, integrated and coherent approach and inter-ministerial cooperation are of paramount importance in this respect. Moreover, national youth policy should establish clear links between local and regional levels, with the active involvement of local authorities (Denstad 2009). All those actors should agree upon a common, coherent and transparent strategy for young people, grounded in a solid evidence base, perceiving young people as a resource, not a burden. Finally, assigning a separate budget dedicated to youth strategy will allow for its flexibility and fine tuning, according to measures and indicators set up in the youth strategy.

The definitions of the notion of youth, as well as youth policy frameworks differ considerably between countries. The approach to youth policy implementation is also different. The following chapters present an outline of the youth policy in each of the Eastern Partnership countries as well as the Russian Federation, describing the main institutions and organisations responsible for its modelling, analysing also for its financing.

Youth policy in the Republic of Armenia

Key statistics

GDP¹: USD 11.9 billion (2019 – World Bank)

GDP per capita: USD 3 395 (2019 – World Bank)

Population: 2 957 727 (2019 – World Bank)

Urbanisation index: 42.73% (2019 – World Bank)

Fertility rate: 1.755 (2018 – World Bank)

Youth population (16–29): 625 796 (2018 – Armenian Statistical Committee; *The Demographic Handbook of Armenia* 2019)

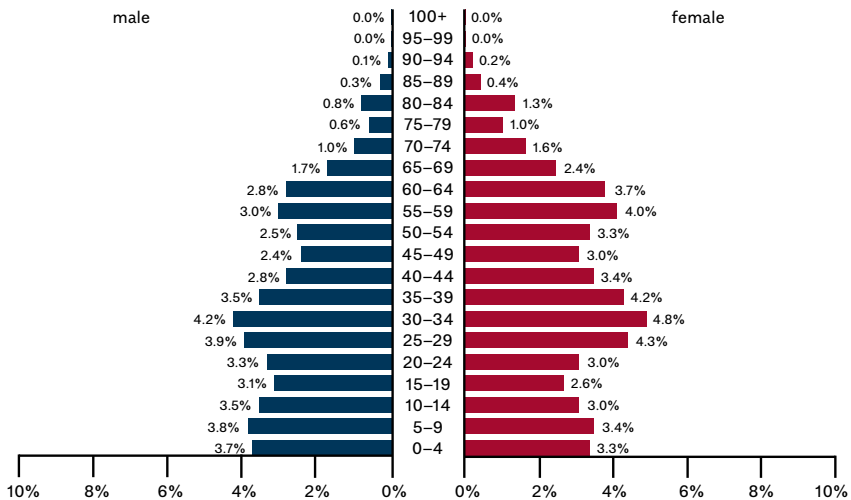
Active voting age: 18

Passive voting age: 18 (local government elections), 25 (national elections)

Population Pyramid (2019)

ARMENIA 2019

POPULATION: 2 957 727



Source: populationpyramid.net.

1 GDP – gross domestic product.

Definition of youth

In the Republic of Armenia, youth is defined as the 16–30 age group (*Strategic Plan of the National Youth Policy...* 2012). According to 2018 data of the National Statistics Office, there are 625 796 such persons, accounting for about 21% of the country's total population.

Legal basis for youth policy

Systemic measures to benefit young people have been under way in Armenia since the 1990s, with the first national youth strategy, covering 1999–2001, adopted in 1998. Over the years, there were several attempts to adopt a national youth law, including in 2001 and 2007, however, none of them succeeded, and Armenia does not have a consolidated youth law (National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia 2007). The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports plans to develop a new youth law in 2021.

Armenia had two national-level legal acts regulating youth policy. The first one is the 2013–2017 Strategy and Action Plan for the Youth State Policy of the Republic of Armenia (Armenian Legal Information System 2013) and the Youth State Policy Concept of the RA for 2015–2025 (Armenian Legal Information System 2015). Youth State Policy Strategy was implemented until 2017 and not renewed. The Concept of the RA for 2015–2025 is not valid since the change of Constitution and Law on Normative Legal Acts in 2018. Nevertheless, the Concept is a basic document in the field of youth state policy, which defines the subjects, the long-term goals (2015–2025), objectives, principles and directions of the RA Youth State Policy.

A draft Strategy for 2018–2022 was prepared and circulated in 2017 among youth and key stakeholders, but it was not approved, again due to the changes in Constitution and Law on Normative Legal Acts in 2018.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports coordinates development of a National Youth Policy Strategy for 2020–2025; in October 2020, the process entered its final consultation phase and adoption of the new strategy is expected by the end of 2020.

Youth policy actors (government and social partners)

At present, youth policy is under the purview of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, with only one department (the Youth Policy, Supplementary and Continuing Education Department) in charge of youth policy. Youth Events Holding Center State Non Commercial Organization, previously responsible for high-level youth projects, was dissolved as of early 2019.

Due to the ongoing youth governance reform, there are no firm structures involving social partners in place.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has a strong emphasis on youth within its employment projects. The State Employment Strategy for 2019–2023 youth is defined as one of the target groups and state employment programmes offer different possibilities for young people.

Youth policy evidence base

Over the last decade, youth policy evidence base mechanisms in Armenia changed significantly. Until 2012, most evidence was generated by the line ministry. In 2013, collaboration between United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs resulted in the establishment of a Youth Studies Institute. Research from the Institute effectuated the development of several youth policy documents. However, the subsequent government restructuring caused many institutions to be closed or merged. This included the Youth Studies Institute, affiliated to the Youth Events Holding Centre SNCO (dissolved pursuant to a governmental decree dated 10 January 2019). Prior to the restructuring, the youth policy sector in Armenia was coordinated by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, which was also responsible for youth policy development, implementation, regulation and co-operation on youth policy matters. The new policy evidence framework is currently being developed and is expected to be fully elaborated in 2021.

Youth policy funding

Youth policy budget is regulated through Armenia's state budget. In 2021, the planned state budget for youth programmes is around 1.85 billion AMD (Armenian dram; ca. EUR 3.25 million) annually (The Ministry of Education... n.d.). A number of other Armenian government departments and ministries run programmes for and with youth – some of them are much larger in scope and budget than the government's national youth policy budget – e.g. state employment programmes, "Work Armenia" strategy, among others.

Youth organisations

Armenia has a thriving civil society scene, including many youth organisations. Although no consolidated data is available, it can be estimated that several hundred youth organisations are registered, out of which many remain inactive. The National Youth Council of Armenia (NYCA), founded in 1997 with a view to assisting the development and promotion of youth policy in Armenia and the involvement of youth in the solution of national tasks, involved over 70 youth organisations from different sectors in 2017 (The National Youth Council... n.d.).

International cooperation and foreign donor funding

Armenia is involved in numerous international cooperation frameworks concerning young people. At the bilateral level, the government concluded agreements on youth co-operation with the Russian Federation and Iran.

At the international level, Armenia is a member of several youth-related initiatives of the European Union (see EaP chapter) as well as the Council of Europe, UN system organisations, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Armenia is a Council of Europe member state and as such it is represented by a national delegate at the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Joint Council on Youth. Armenian researchers are also represented in the Pool of European

Youth Researchers (PEYR) and the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP).

The EU remains the single largest international donor, and many of its interventions are relevant to youth and youth policy, usually covering a number of fields such as education and employment. In recent years several large scale youth programmes were also supported by Russian Federation.

EU Erasmus+, Solidarity Corps, EU4Youth, and other mobility programmes involve a range of youth and youth stakeholders. The programmes offer both exchange with EU counterparts and capacity building at the local level. Armenia is taking part in four EU4Youth grant projects launched in 2018 to support employability and entrepreneurship among disadvantaged youth, as well as 18 capacity building projects.

Armenian education stakeholders are also in exchange with the EU – between 2015–2017, 1 443 young Armenians and youth organisations benefited from Erasmus+ exchange projects and 123 were involved in EU-funded activities targeting young people and decision-makers.

Youth policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan

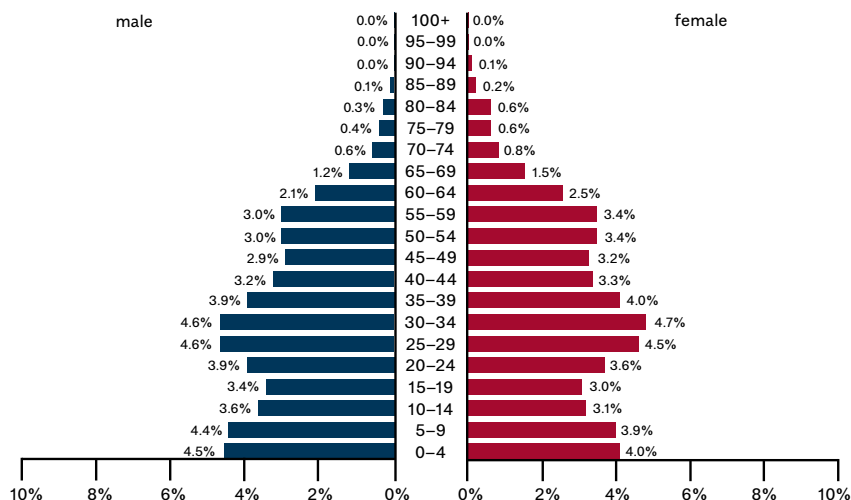
Key statistics

GDP¹: USD 48.048 billion (2019 – World Bank)
 GDP per capita: USD 4 793 (2019 – World Bank)
 Population: 10 047 718 (2019 – World Bank)
 Urbanisation index: 56% (2018 – Asian Development Bank)
 Fertility rate: 1.73 (2018 – World Bank)
 Youth population (14–29): 2.38 million (estimates, 2018;
 The State Statistical Committee... n.d.)
 Active voting age: 18
 Passive voting age: 25

Population Pyramid (2019)

azerbaijan 2019

POPULATION: 10 047 718



Source: populationpyramid.net.

1 GDP – gross domestic product.

Definition of youth

According to the 2002 Law on Youth Policy, youth is defined as all Azerbaijani residents aged 14–29 (Law on Youth Policy... 2002). Azerbaijan has a very young population – children and youth account for about 29% of the total population of Azerbaijan.

Legal basis for youth policy

Youth policy in Azerbaijan is considered an important part of government policy with strong support from the executive (government and president) bodies. The process of developing support to young people in Azerbaijan has been paved by a range of legal instruments. The first legal instruments were elaborated in the 1990s, when the Ministry of Youth and Sport was set up and the first youth policy law was drafted, starting in 1999. This process concluded in 2002 with the Law On Youth Policy (further amended in 2017 and 2019) and was followed up by the development of a Youth Development Strategy for 2015–2025 and the State Programme Youth of Azerbaijan in 2017–2021 (n.d.).

According to the 2002 law, the main objective of the youth policy of Azerbaijan is to provide support for young people in developing their competencies and skills, to counteract social problems and guarantee protection of rights of young people (Law No. 297-IIG 2002). The law lists six key areas: spiritual, ethical and concerning cultural education, support for talented young people, health and physical education, the labour market, support for young families and support for youth organisations.

Youth policy actors (government and social partners)

The main body responsible for implementing the youth policy in this country is the Ministry of Youth and Sports, established in 1994. Its main tasks include ensuring young people the right conditions for development (in accordance with the Law on Youth Policy) and also to promote national values and to supervise youth organisations. The Ministry is also responsible for implementation of the programme on Azerbaijani Youth in 2017–2021, which is

the basic implementation mechanism of the Law on Youth Policy. In 2017, a Department of Youth Policy and Sport Issues was created at the Presidential Administration of Azerbaijan. The department supports the development of policy and its implementation. Furthermore, in 2015 the Parliament of Azerbaijan created a Committee on Youth and Sports – the committee is leading the development of draft laws and decisions on the formation and implementation of state policy in the field of youth and sports.

An important role in shaping youth policy is played by the Azerbaijan Youth Foundation, which supports measures benefiting young people in such areas as science, education or culture, by allocating grants for various projects, including international ones (Azerbaijan Youth Foundation n.d.). Since its establishment in December 2011, it has co-financed over 5000 projects for over EUR 20 million. This is a unique example among the Eastern Partnership and other countries of a large-scale national fund supporting youth initiatives and youth organisations.

The National Assembly of Youth Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan (NAYORA), established in 1995, brings together 124 youth organisations, nearly half of the country's registered youth NGOs. NAYORA's main responsibilities are: coordination of activities of affiliated organisations, fostering participation of young people in political life, representing youth organisations at the regional and national level and providing support for dialogue, cooperation and the exchange of good practices between affiliated organisations. NAYORA represents Azerbaijan at the international level as a full member of the European Youth Forum (Nayora n.d.).

State-funded youth work is an important component of the youth policy governance system in Azerbaijan. It is carried out by youth centres across Azerbaijan. There are about 40 youth centres in the country, 12 of which are operated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the others by local authorities and other organisations. Youth centres managed by the Ministry function according to an action plan approved by the Ministry and are funded from the state budget (Youth Policy in Azerbaijan n.d.).

Youth policy evidence base

The evidence base for youth policy comes from annual reports from state organisations on implementation of the Youth Development Strategy and the Youth of Azerbaijan State Programme, as well as ad hoc research conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and international organisations. Additional research is conducted by international organisations on an ad hoc basis – UNICEF Azerbaijan conducted research into the needs of youth workers that served as a foundation for the development of an MA programme implemented jointly by five Azerbaijani universities.

Youth policy funding

The state budget for youth policy (including youth work) was AZN 10 million (EUR 5.35 million) in 2018 and AZN 7.3 million (EUR 3.9 million) in 2019. The state budget provides regular support to local youth policy structures – in 2019, AZN 800 000 (EUR 428 000) was provided for maintenance and activities of local (district) youth and sport departments. The 12 youth centres operated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports have an annual general budget of AZN 1 million (EUR 535 000). This sum comes under the state budget for youth policy (Azeri Press Agency 2019).

Youth organisations

Article 9 of the April 2019 amendment to the Law on Youth Policy defines youth organisations as NGOs that are established for the purpose of identifying and solving young people's problems, protecting their rights, meeting their spiritual needs, etc., in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan On Non-governmental Organisations (public associations and foundations), by individuals aged 16 to 35 and/or youth organisations pursuant to this Law. Membership of youth organisations is terminated at the age of 35. As of 2015, there were about 300 youth NGOs registered by the Ministry of Justice (*Eastern...* 2015).

International cooperation and foreign donor funding

Azerbaijan is part of a number of international youth cooperation platforms. In 2004, the international platform of the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation was established in Baku to develop a joint youth policy of the countries associated in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In 2015, the Azerbaijani government hosted the first Global Forum on Youth Policies, organised jointly with the United Nations. The Forum was the largest UN hosted youth-focused event since the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in Lisbon in 1998. The forum involved delegates from 165 countries, 115 governments, including over 70 Ministers or Deputy Ministers.

Azerbaijan cooperates regularly with the Council of Europe youth structures and is represented by a national delegate at the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Joint Council on Youth.

Azerbaijan is also part of a range of EU Programmes for youth and youth organisations. Between 2015 and 2017, many Azerbaijani youth organisations and almost 2000 young people from Azerbaijan have been actively involved in the Erasmus+ youth exchange and volunteering programmes. Azerbaijani youth organisations are also taking part in 6 EU-funded capacity building projects.

Youth policy in the Republic of Belarus

Key statistics

GDP¹: USD 63.1 billion (2019 – World Bank)

GDP per capita: USD 6 713 (2019 – World Bank)

Population: 9 452 409 (2019 – World Bank)

Urbanisation index: 79% (2019 – Asian Development Bank)

Fertility rate: 1.448 (2018 – World Bank)

Youth population (14–31): 1 858 500 (2019 – National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus)

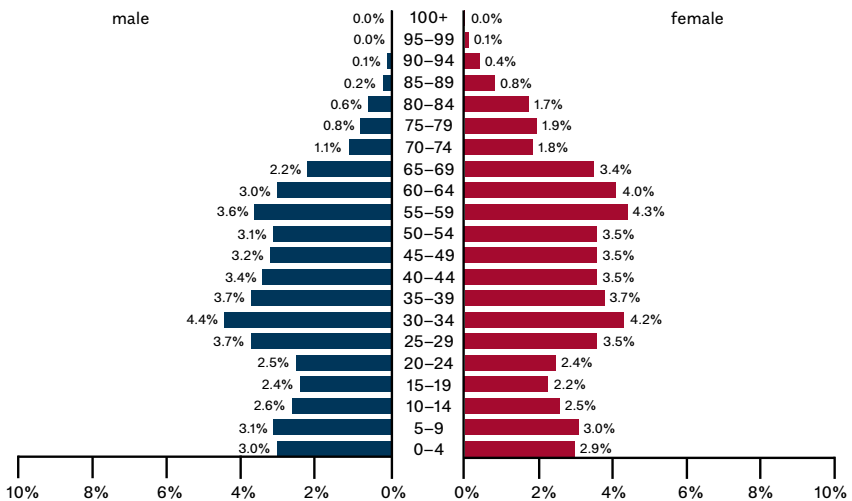
Active voting age: 18

Passive voting age: 21 for parliament's lower house, 30 for upper house

Population Pyramid (2019)

BELARUS 2019

POPULATION: 9 452 409



Source: populationpyramid.net.

1 GDP – gross domestic product.

Definition of youth

According to the Law on general principles of youth policy of 7 December 2009, being the foundation of the state youth strategy, youth is understood as persons aged 14 to 31 years (Об Основах Государственной Молодежной Политики n.d.). Young people within those age brackets account for about 20% of the total population of Belarus.

Legal basis for youth policy

The foundations of Belarusian youth policy are spread across a number of legal acts from the country's constitution to educational and youth programmes. The 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Belarus stipulates the main objectives of state activity for young people. They include supporting education as well as spiritual, ethical and physical development of young people, creating the right conditions for youth participation in political, social, economic and cultural life and ensuring social, financial and legal support for young people in carrying out their life goals (Constitution of the Republic of Belarus 1994). The Law on general principles of youth policy of 7 December 2009 regulates the basic issues related to the development, economic and social support of young Belarusians as well as the directions of development of the state youth policy (Об Основах Государственной Молодежной Политики n.d.). The 1999 Law on State Support for Belarusian Public Organisations Operating for Children and Young People outlines the main principles of public recognition for youth organisations (Закон Республики Беларусь 1999). The Education Law (of 13 January 2011) provides details of state educational policy, focusing on youth (Кодекс 2011). Furthermore, the 2016 Programme of the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development for 2016–2020 identifies as one of its five priorities the development of the potential of the younger generation. The Programme stipulates that youth should be engaged in the creation and development of a knowledge-based economy. Finally, the 2016 Education and Youth Policy for 2016–2020 defines the purpose of youth policy as supporting active citizenship and patriotic attitudes among young people and engaging them in activities for the country (Министерство Образования Республики Беларусь n.d.).

A new “Strategy of Youth Policy Development in the Republic of Belarus until 2030” is currently at the final stages of drafting. The new strategy envisages further development of the institutional structures for youth policy, including establishing a comprehensive organisational framework for youth work by instituting the position of “youth work specialist” in those enterprises and entities with over 100 (rural areas) or 300 (cities) young employees under the age of 31, strengthening training and professional development systems for specialists in youth work and the leaders of youth or children’s organisations and strengthening the methodological framework for specialists in youth work, leaders of youth and children’s organisations and other youth policy stakeholders. The new Strategy also focuses on ensuring a participatory approach to youth policy and improving the quality of life of young people and strengthening their role in socio-economic development.

Youth policy actors (government and social partners)

The main body responsible for implementing the youth policy is the Ministry of Education, which supervises activities in the following areas: civic and patriotic education of young people, health, support for young families, young people attending school and very talented young people, employment promotion, protection of the right to freely associate and support for international cooperation.

As indicated in the list of legal acts, the youth policy in Belarus is closely related to other policy domains including social and educational policy, and is therefore also shaped by other government bodies (Ministry of Architecture and Construction, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Sports and Tourism, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Communication and Information, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy). Local authorities in Belarus have limited competences and as such do not actively contribute to youth policy governance at national level.

Main social partners in Belarus' youth policy include the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (see below), as the country's largest youth organisation, and the Belarusian Committee for Youth Organisations, established in 2003. Although BCYO is not recognised by the European Youth Forum and its activities are limited, the state authorities recognise it as an official youth council.

The Belarusian National Youth Council, or RADA, was established in 1992. It was legally registered five years later and functioned as a platform representing the sector of youth organisations in the country and abroad until 2006, when it was dissolved by the decision of the Supreme Court. It has since not been recognised by the national authorities. RADA now operates unofficially; it remains a full member of the European Youth Forum and brings together more than 20 organisations and informal groups, continuing to represent Belarus at the international level. In 2014, the RADA registered a technical office in Vilnius, to again acquire legal personality and greater transparency of operation.

Youth work is an important part of the youth policy governance system in Belarus. Although the term "youth work" is not defined in Belarusian legislation, there is a comprehensive state system for the recognition of youth work as a professional occupation. Notable elements of this system include the position of "specialist in youth work" in large enterprises and entities (pursuant to the Resolution of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Belarus No. 42 of 30 March 2006 On Amendments to Revision 1 and Amendments to Revision 27 of the Uniform Classification of Qualifications for Job Positions); an occupational standard with defined professional duties and requirements with regard to educational and training background; an official educational standard with a distinct list of professional skills; formal education programmes for university graduates, including a 2-year retraining course, "organisation of youth work", leading to the professional qualification "specialist in youth work"; a variety of non-formal education programmes and professional development courses for youth workers; a professional association of specialists in youth work as a national platform for professional youth workers (Ignatovitch 2019).

Youth policy evidence base

The Ministry of Education is responsible for elaborating a youth policy evidence base at central level with regards to youth work planning, support, delivery and monitoring. The evidence base for youth policy comes mostly from the state academia and research institutions. Pursuant to the Law On Foundations of the State Youth Policy (Article 23), the Ministry of Education prepares annual national reports on the situation of young people in Belarus. The reports present data on a wide range of issues, including youth worker policy, socio-economic support for young people, prevention of crimes among young people, youth participation in the sociopolitical life of the country, youth and children's NGOs, and systems of supplementary education for children and young people. Since 2016, the Belarusian National Institute for Higher Education has conducted research on the topic of "professional and competence culture of a youth work specialist". The Institute also publishes the academic journals *Modern Youth and Society* and *Pedagogy of Co-authorship*, where much of the research on youth-related issues and policies is published (Salikau 2017).

Youth policy funding

In accordance with the Law On Foundations of the State Youth Policy (Article 22), funding for the state youth policy comes from the national and local budgets. Furthermore, special funds may be established for financing activities in the sphere of youth policy in general, and youth work in particular. The total youth policy budget for 2016–2020 is BYN 15 302 095 (Belarusian ruble; ca. EUR 5 million), including BYN 3 661 541 (ca. EUR 1.2 million) for 2020 (Приложение 13 n.d.).

A number of other Belarusian government departments and ministries run programmes for and with youth – some of them are much larger in scope and budget than the government's national youth policy budget – e.g. the "State Programme on Social Protection and Promotion of Employment of the Population for 2016–2020", "State Programme «Small and Medium-sized Business in the Republic of Belarus» for 2016–2020", "State Programme «Comfortable Housing and Favorable Environment»

for 2016–2020”, “State Programme «People’s Health and Demographic Security of the Republic of Belarus» for 2016– 2020”. As those programmes target wider social groups it is not possible to discern specific youth allocations, but as the programmes themselves are significantly larger than youth policy, their expenses on youth are most likely to exceed the state youth policy budget.

Youth organisations

As of 2018, there were 2 731 registered public associations in Belarus, including 320 youth associations. This group included 26 children’s organisations, 61 youth organisations with international and national status and 259 organisations with local status. However, no official statistics were available on the exact number of youth organisations that were active (Fras and Ignatovitch 2020).

It is worth noting that Belarus is home to the largest national youth organisation in Europe – the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM) with over half a million members and receiving a large majority of the public budget available to youth organisations. BRSM focuses on such directions of activity as: patriotic upbringing, volunteerism, organisation of leisure time, employment of young people or digital technologies. This is a flagship initiative of the Belarusian state, fully presenting a model of work with young people following the model of the Communist Youth Union from the days of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (Белорусский республиканский союз молодежи n.d.)

A number of other types of youth organisations play a role in Belarus youth policy. Student self-governance bodies, student union committees as well as social and psychological services provide a range of training opportunities, such as certified training courses for summer camp counsellors, volunteer groups and youth leaders.

International cooperation and foreign donor funding

Belarus has signed bilateral agreements on cooperation in education, science, youth policy and sports, with such countries as: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Serbia, Saudi Arabia, China, Moldova, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and Turkey.

Belarus is also involved in youth policy co-operation across international organisations and platforms such as the Union of Russia and Belarus, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the EU Eastern Partnership initiative.

Although Belarus is not a member of the Council of Europe, it is party to the European Cultural convention and thus represented by a national delegate at the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Joint Council on Youth. Since 2013, Belarus has taken part in the No Hate Speech Movement. Belarusian representatives take part in many youth programmes of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. Interaction with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe is carried out through various formats including study visits with the support of the Information Point of the Council of Europe in Minsk. Belarus is also represented in the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) and the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) – (Council of Europe n.d.).

Belarus is also part of a range of EU Programmes for youth and youth organisations. Between 2015 and 2017, many Belarusian youth organisations and almost 2 300 young people from Belarus have been actively involved in the Erasmus+ youth exchange and volunteering programme. Belarus is taking part in 3 EU4Youth grant projects launched in 2018 to support jobs and entrepreneurship among disadvantaged youth, as well as 8 capacity building projects.

Youth policy in Georgia

Key statistics

GDP¹: USD 15.7 billion (2019 – World Bank)

GDP per capita: USD 4 764 (2019 – World Bank)

Population: 4 008 722 (2018 – GEOSTAT)

Urbanisation index: 54% (2017 – Asian Development Bank)

Fertility rate: 2.1 (2018 – GEOSTAT)

Youth population (15–29): 18.9% (2018 – FES)

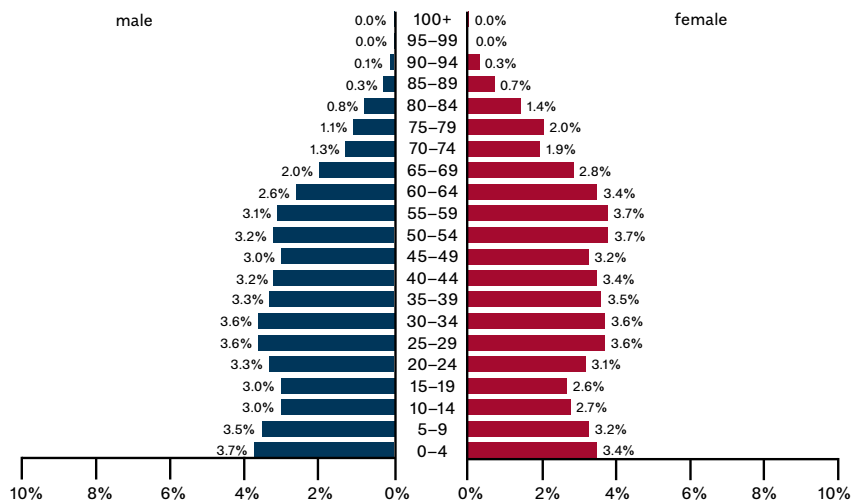
Active voting age: 18

Passive voting age: 25

Population Pyramid (2017)

GEORGIA 2017

POPULATION: 4 008 722



Source: populationpyramid.net.

1 GDP – gross domestic product.

Definition of youth

There is no explicit definition of youth in Georgian legislation, other than references to age of majority (18) and passive voting age (25). Georgia's National Youth Policy Document (2014) defines youth as persons aged 14–29.

Georgia's National Statistical Office (GEOSTAT) applies a number of age sub-categories in its work, including 10–14, 15–19, 20–24 and 25–29 years. As of January 2018, young people between the ages of 15 and 29 made up 18.9% of Georgia's population. A majority of young people residing in Georgia are men (52%) between the ages of 25 and 29 (38.7%).

Legal basis for youth policy

The legal basis for the youth policy in Georgia is composed of a number of legal documents. At the most general level, documents pertaining to youth include the Law on State Support to Children's and Youth Unions of 22 June 1999, the Law on Protection of Minors of 28 September 2001.

In terms of youth policy, the key document is the National Youth Policy Document of 2 April 2014. The Document aims to enable young people to fully use their potential and also to create mechanisms conducive to their engagement in all spheres of public life.

Further to the adoption of the policy document, a Georgian Youth Action Plan was adopted in 2015 as its key implementation measure. The Plan outlines the most important actions of the government for young people, repeats the assumptions of already existing documents and proposes several new solutions: support for youth work, improving recognition of the results of work with young people and support for the participation of young people in international activities and programmes.

In July 2020, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a new Georgian National Youth Policy Concept 2020–2030.

The Concept identifies five priority areas for Georgia's youth policy between 2020 and 2030:

- » active participation of young people in public life and democratic processes,
- » promoting youth development and realisation of their potential,
- » health and well-being of young people,
- » economic empowerment of young people,
- » improving the management of the national youth policy at the central and municipal levels.

The Concept further obliges the Government of Georgia to develop an Action Plan for the implementation of the "Georgian National Youth Policy Concept for 2020–2030", formulating appropriate measures and identifying agencies responsible for the implementation of the measures, by April 1, 2021. A strategy building on the Concept, including an action plan, is currently being developed and is expected to be adopted by the end of 2020 (Parliament n.d.).

Youth policy actors (government and social partners)

Youth policy implementation framework in Georgia has changed repeatedly in the last few years. Until 2017, implementation of youth policy was overseen by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Towards the end of 2017, following government restructuring and abolishment of the Ministry, coordination of the activities within the Georgian Youth Action Plan became the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. The Ministry included a Youth Affairs Department, responsible for e.g.: helping young people enter the labour market, working out legislation concerning young people, supporting student self-government, supporting young people with special needs (ethnic minorities, displaced persons or young people with fewer opportunities) and fostering a civil society, participation in international programmes and promotion of non-formal education. Furthermore, the Children and Youth National Centre, operating at the Ministry since 2007, was responsible for implementation of some youth programmes at national level. The Centre implemented programmes that support young people, through establishing educational centres and clubs,

and other local government units that work with young people. Other responsibilities included regular monitoring of the situation of children and young people in Georgia. Another executive body, the Children and Youth Development Foundation, operating at the Ministry since 2000, was a government agency supporting the development and implementation of youth policy and ensuring active participation of young people in social life.

In 2019, the government of Georgia decided to reform the youth policy implementation structures and formed a dedicated Youth Agency, bringing together the three institutions listed above (the Youth Affairs Division of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Children and Youth National Centre and the Children and Youth Development Foundation). The Youth Agency is an executive body overseen by the Prime Minister's Office and is responsible for youth policy implementation in Georgia.

Social partners, including self-government and non-governmental organisations, are also important actors in youth policy in Georgia. Many local municipalities in Georgia have their local youth councils active in youth policy at the local level. Between 2017 and 2019, World Vision Georgia together with the former Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia supported the Telavi and Baghdati municipalities in effective functioning of youth councils. Furthermore, eight local municipalities across Georgia have their own local youth strategies and support youth organisations working locally. In 2017, Georgian youth workers set up their professional association – with over 50 members, the association is an active contributor to policy-making and advocacy in the field of youth and youth work.

Youth work is an important part of the youth policy landscape in Georgia. Georgia has a new Youth Workers Association cooperating closely with government youth policy institutions and donors, that has recently been accredited by the Ministry of Education to offer professional development courses for youth workers.

Although it has not been legally defined, Georgia's Youth Agency and the Georgian Youth Workers Association jointly developed a youth worker professional qualification and in September 2020

started offering courses for youth workers. A Youth Work Key Skills Framework document has already been drawn up by the Ministry of Education and is awaiting further elaboration and approval (EEAS Europe 2020).

Youth policy evidence base

Georgia lacks a comprehensive youth policy evidence base linked to its policy framework, but several sources of information contribute to the planning and implementation of youth policy. The (now abolished) Youth Affairs Division had a research and analytical unit that analysed current policy implementation (Action Plan) using 52 indicators until 2019. The six main areas of evaluation were duration, geographical coverage, gender, sources of information (government body and research body) and the responsible line ministry. A new framework for evidence gathering is now being developed by the Youth Agency, as part of the new Youth Strategy 2025 development process.

Secondly, Georgia's national statistics office collects statistics relevant to youth including general demographic information, health, employment and education, but they are not aligned with youth policy target groups and priorities.

Finally, independent, non-governmental and international actors including civil society organisations, think tanks and international organisations present in Georgia research and analyse the situation of young people. In 2019, UNFPA Georgia undertook an external evaluation of the youth policy action plan implementation, and UNDP Georgia commissioned a report on youth policy governance. In 2020, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung released a report on youth policy implementation at local level in Tbilisi and Imereti.

Youth policy funding

The youth policy budget is relatively small and shrank with recent years. The former Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education's budget has decreased between 2017 and 2019

from GEL 2 million to GEL 500 000 (Georgian lari; that is from EUR 600 000 to EUR 150 000). The newly created Youth Agency had an initial budget of GEL 3 million (EUR 900 000) in 2019, with the same amount forecast for 2020, but this was reduced by 50% during the 2020 pandemic.

A number of other government departments and ministries run programmes for and with youth – some of them are much larger in scope and budget than the Youth Agency and government youth policy budget – e.g. the Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency has a budget of USD 40 million.

Youth organisations

Georgia has a diverse and rich youth organisation landscape, with over 190 active NGOs working with and on youth issues. The largest youth umbrella organisation, the National Council of Youth Organisations, established in 1995, is a member of the European Youth Forum and brings together over 60 NGOs working for young people.

A number of larger civil society organisations are also involved in youth policy projects and programmes. Sector Three, one of the best-resourced NGOs based in Tbilisi, runs activities for and with young people including youth campaigns, but they are not linked to youth policy in a structured way or financed from the government budget. Active youth organisations also include branches and local offices of international NGOs and charities active in the field of youth such as Save the Children and World Vision.

International cooperation and foreign donor funding

Georgia is involved in numerous international cooperation frameworks concerning young people. At the bilateral level, the government concluded agreements involving young people with: Lithuania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova and Iran.

At the international level, Georgia is a member of several youth-related initiatives of the European Union (see EaP chapter) as well as the Council of Europe and UN system organisations.

The EU remains the single largest international donor, and many of its interventions are relevant to youth and youth policy, usually covering a number of fields such as education and employment. The largest programme in the field of Vocational Education and Training in Georgia, the “Skills Development for Matching Labour Market Needs” programme, has a budget of EUR 48.85 million (2018–2022). Furthermore, Georgia is part of numerous EU schemes and programmes in the fields of education, youth, culture and sports, including EU4Youth and EU4Youth II projects, and the Eastern Partnership Youth Window.

EU mobility programmes involve a range of youth and education stakeholders in exchange with the EU – between 2015–2017, EU funding enabled 2 504 students and academic staff from Georgia to study or teach in the EU; 49 Master’s students from Georgia have received full Erasmus scholarships. Within the eTwinning Plus programme, 422 schools from Georgia are involved in exchanges and professional development for teachers. The EU has also supported the EaP European School in Tbilisi since September 2018, offering a quality curriculum to young people from all EaP countries.

Youth policy in the Republic of Moldova

Key statistics

GDP¹: USD 15.7 billion (2019 – World Bank)

GDP per capita: USD 4 503 (2019 – World Bank)

Population: 2 640 000 (2020 – Republic of Moldova NBS)

Urbanisation index: 54% (2017 – Asian Development Bank)

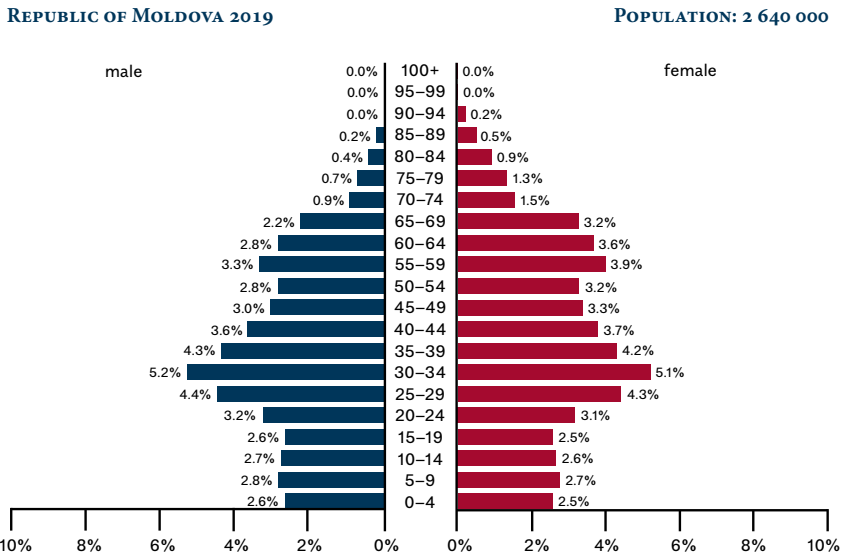
Fertility rate: 1.262 (2018 – World Bank)

Youth population (14–35): 710 800 (2020)

Active voting age: 18

Passive voting age: 25

Population Pyramid (2019)



Source: populationpyramid.net.

1 GDP – gross domestic product.

Definition of youth

The Law on Youth No. 215 of 29 July 2016 is the national legal act that defines youth age in the Republic of Moldova. Article 2 defines a young person as a person aged between 14 and 35. Article 2 also defines a young family – either a couple, formed through marriage, in which one of the spouses has not reached the age of 35 years or a single parent under 35 years of age. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, in 2019 in the Republic of Moldova, 710 800 people, or 26.9% of the country's population were aged 14–34.

Legal basis for youth policy

The history of Republic of Moldova's youth policy legislation goes back to 1999, when the first Law on Youth was adopted. The Youth Act of 1999 was repealed by the Parliament, with the approval of the new Law on Youth in 2016. The new law contains new concepts/definitions, such as: youth work; non-formal education of young people; youth worker; youth organisation; youth center; regional youth council etc. which are in the same line with the approach and understanding of these concepts developed, in particular by the Council of Europe and the European Union in general.

The Law on Youth is divided into six chapters, encompassing the most important social and economic aspects, and forms of participation of young people in public life. Thus, according to the law, there will be developed and elaborated conceptions, strategies, plans and regulations specific to the youth field, which will have the mission to provide young people with equal opportunities and appropriate conditions. This law will enable young people to develop their knowledge and skills to participate actively in all aspects of life through full integration and engagement, access to information and quality services in education, health and leisure (Parlamentul Lege Nr. 215 2016).

Youth policy implementation is guided by the "National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020", approved by the government in December 2014. The strategy's main vision is for Republic

of Moldova's youth sector to be reinforced and recognised as an important field in the development and prosperity of the Republic of Moldova, by which the capitalisation of maximum potential of all young people and the improvement of their quality of life is assured. The purpose of the Strategy is to develop and reinforce the youth sector during its six year validity period: 2014–2020. The strategy aims to achieve its vision through four specific objectives: increasing the level of involvement of young people in the consolidation process of participatory democracy; contributing to the development of knowledge, abilities, habits, attitudes and behaviours required for a better integration of young people in society, inclusively of those with limited opportunities; creating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for young people, especially those with limited opportunities and finally by developing the youth sector infrastructure and support mechanisms in order to assure the quality of youth work.

Youth policy actors (government and social partners)

According to the youth law and strategy mentioned above, responsibilities related to shaping the youth policy were the remit of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The Ministry's duties have been transferred to the new Ministry of Education, Culture and Research in 2017. Since then, the Ministry has been responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national youth policy. In August 2020, the government of Republic of Moldova created a new youth policy implementation body – National Agency for Programmes Development and Youth Work (ANDPAT). The main purpose of the Agency is training and continuous improvement of the staff, programmes, activities and services for the youth field, and for their implementation, accreditation, monitoring and evaluation. The main responsibilities of the Agency are: coordinating the implementation of current programmes in the youth sector that develops youth work, development of a national monitoring mechanism and ensuring the quality of youth services, development and training of human resources and development of various thematic studies, research and analysis in the field. As the Agency has just been created, it is in early stages of activity planning. In the first phase of its work, ANDPAT plans to take over the 4 large-scale programmes

that are implemented over the last years by the Ministry: the Grants Programme for Youth Organizations, the Youth Capital Programme, the National Development Programme of Local Youth Councils and the National Youth Centers Development Programme (Guvernul Hotărîre Nr. 598 2020).

It should be noted that due to the Moldovan youth policy's cross-sectoral approach, youth policy implementation also requires the involvement of the central public institutions, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Ministry of Healthcare, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, and the organisations of civil society.

According to the Law On Youth, both central and local authorities are also involved in the planning and implementation of youth policy. However, despite being assigned a leading role in the development of the youth sector, and its clear definition, local public authorities are severely constrained by the absence of local public administration reform, which is expected to provide methodological and technical assistance, and necessary resources and capacities; their contribution to policy-making is therefore very small.

The main public forum for youth policy stakeholder consultations is the Governmental Commission on Youth Policies, created in 2011. The Commission has 20 members and is composed of an equal number of government and civil society representatives. The Commission's structure includes a chairman, two vice-presidents, a secretary and working groups. The Prime Minister exercises the position of the President of the Commission. The positions of Vice-Presidents of the Commission are exercised by the Deputy Prime Minister (from the central public administration) and by a representative of the civil society (usually, the National Youth Council – see below) – (Guvernul Hotărîre Nr. 733 2011). The Commission remains a dormant body – even though its regulations are still in force, as it has not met since 2016.

Moldovan youth organisations are represented within youth policy governance structures by the National Youth Council, established in 1999. Its basic responsibility is to represent the interests of the

affiliated organisations and implement measures benefiting young people in projects dealing with formal and non-formal education. The Council currently brings together 61 organisations and is a full member of the European Youth Forum and the International Council of youth organisations of the Francophonie (CIJEF) – (Consiliul National... n.d.).

The National Youth Capital project represents another co-operation platform for youth policy stakeholders, with the representatives of local public authorities, regional and national NGOs, international NGOs, as well as key ministries. Once the locality is selected to be the National Youth Capital, an action plan with events at the local level with national participation of all the localities will be developed by the local public administration of that locality, local youth NGOs, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and other ministries (Programul "Capitala Tineretului" n.d.).

Youth policy evidence base

According to the National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020, the line ministry (formerly Ministry of Youth and Sports, now Ministry of Education, Culture and Research) is responsible for coordinating the implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of this strategic planning document. According to the National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020, the Ministry is obliged to present to the government, by 31 March of each year, the report on the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan. Data for the report comes from the Ministry's own research and the National Bureau of Statistics.

The Strategy further stipulates the mechanisms of data collection and monitoring of youth policies' implementation, including appointing reference group with the role of monitoring the Strategy implementation process, periodic evaluation of the implementation, accomplishment of advocacy activity and of dialogue with the partners responsible for the implementation of the four priorities of the Strategy, as well as of initiating the implementation process and obtaining the expected results. While evaluating the implementation progress of the Strategy, two independent intermediate evaluations for the targets established

are planned, in order to adjust the plans to the current needs of young people. The first evaluation was conducted in 2018, in partnership with UNICEF Moldova, and the Strategy was updated as a result.

Further evidence base for Republic of Moldova's youth policy also comes from civil society actors and international organisations, including UN agencies (Notably UNFPA Moldova, active in supporting youth policy), World Bank and others. Additionally, the government contracts think tanks to evaluate its sectoral strategy.

Youth policy funding

Youth policy funding levels are regulated by the National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020 and the Law on Youth, outlining the funding of youth policies from the state budget by the line ministry and others, as per cross-sectoral programmes. In 2020, the planned central youth policy budget of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research was MDL 22 million (Moldovan leu; ca. EUR 1.1 million). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reduction in state revenues, the law on the state budget was revised a number of times during 2020. The budget for youth, last updated on the 8th of October was MDL 14 million (ca. EUR 735 000) – (Comisia de examinare... 2020).

Additionally, the Ministry of Education organises an annual Grant Programme focused on supporting youth organisation. The programme provides logistical and financial support to achieve initiatives, programmes and youth projects, consolidating in this way co-operation with civil society. In 2019, 27 youth NGOs received funding within the Grant Programme. The total amount allocated towards the 2019 annual grant programme was MDL 7 million (ca. EUR 350 000) – (Comisia de examinare... 2020).

Moldova's National Youth Council of Moldova produces annual reports on allocations from local budgets towards youth policy. The total budget allocated by local authorities in 2018 amounted to approximately EUR 1.45 million, representing a 55% increase compared with 2017. It is also notable that the amount allocated

by local authorities to youth activities is very uneven across the regions (Indoitu and Ciurea 2019). The National Youth Capital programme also benefits from government funding – in 2019, it was MDL 1.17 million (ca. EUR 57 000).

As the youth policy budget is very limited, there are a number of other initiatives with substantial resources for youth. The partnership between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and UNFPA Moldova was established by signing the agreement for the Joint Fund for Development of Youth Centres, including vulnerable young people. The programme is implemented in the territorial-administrative units of the Republic of Moldova, where local authorities undertake to develop and expand the territorial coverage of youth services. As of 2019, other partners joined the Joint Fund, including the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Council of Europe, with the objective of developing a civic and volunteering spirit among youth and building the School – Youth Centre Partnership. The total budget of the project for the period 2017–2022 is ca. EUR 3 million (Joint Fund... 2019).

Youth organisations

Although the exact number of active youth organisations is not available, the number of NGOs in the Republic of Moldova is high – around 12000 registered NGOs for a population of just over 2.5 million (2018 *Civil society...* 2019). Around one third of registered NGOs identify youth as one of their statutory aims or target groups (Berbeca, Tugui and Indoitu 2019). As mentioned above, the National Youth Council of Moldova – operates on national level with 61 member organisations. At local level, there is a national network of local youth councils, i.e. a youth NGO that consists of youth councils at district/municipal level and is also represented at national and international level (Rețeaua Națională... n.d.).

International cooperation and foreign donor funding

Republic of Moldova is involved in a number of bilateral and international youth cooperation platforms. The government signed memorandums of understanding on youth co-operation with the following countries: Estonia, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Romania, Belarus, Lithuania, Armenia and Georgia.

The Joint Operational Programme Romania – Moldova 2014–2020, funded by the European Union through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) includes objectives and priorities concerning young people (ENI-Cross Border Cooperation n.d.), notably:

- » institutional co-operation in education to increase access to and quality of education,
- » promotion and support for research and innovation,
- » promotion of local culture and protection of historical heritage.

The programme budget is EUR 89.1 million for the entire seven-year cycle (2014–2020). Republic of Moldova also cooperates regularly with the Council of Europe youth structures – the government is represented by a national delegate at the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Joint Council on Youth.

Republic of Moldova signed an Association Agreement with the EU and is part of a range of EU Programmes for youth and youth organisations. Between 2015 and 2017, many Moldovan youth organisations and almost 2 300 young people from Republic of Moldova have been actively involved in the Erasmus+ youth exchange and volunteering programmes. Republic of Moldova is taking part in an EU4Youth grant project launched in 2018 to support jobs and entrepreneurship among disadvantaged youth in rural areas, as well as in 15 capacity building projects.

Youth policy in Ukraine

Key statistics

GDP¹: USD 153.2 billion (2019 – World Bank)

GDP per capita: USD 3 649 (2019 – World Bank)

Population: 43 993 643 (2019 – UKRSTAT)

Urbanisation index: 69.47% (2019 – World Bank)

Fertility rate: 1.3 (2018 – UKRSTAT)

Youth population (15–34): 10 846 025 out of 43 993 643
(2017 – UKRSTAT; Statistical Yearbook... 2018)

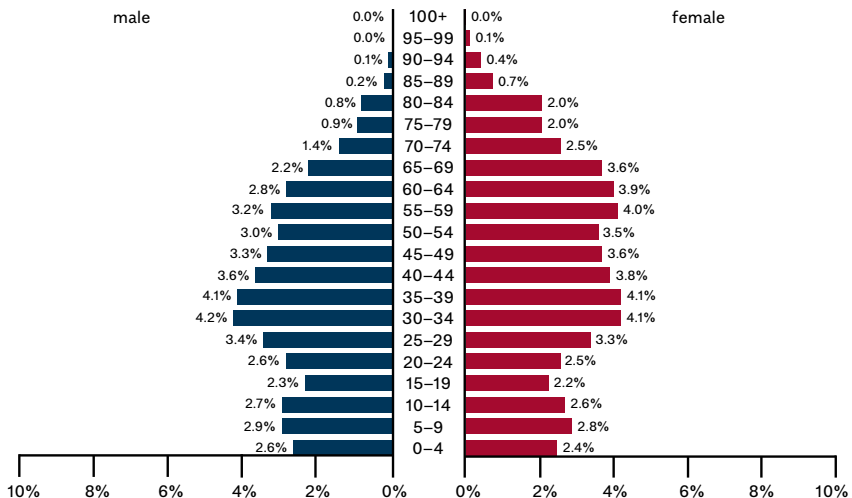
Active voting age: 18

Passive voting age: 21

Population Pyramid (2019)

UKRAINE 2019

POPULATION: 43 993 643



Source: populationpyramid.net.

1 GDP – gross domestic product.

Definition of youth

According to the Youth Development Law of 5 February 1993, youth is defined as Ukrainian residents aged 14–30 (Про сприяння... 1993). According to 2017 Ukrainian Statistical Committee (UKRSTAT) data, there are 10 846 025 people in this age group in Ukraine, accounting for about 25.69% of the country's population (42 216 766).

Legal basis for youth policy

Youth policy is covered by ample government documents and frameworks relevant to youth. The basic legal act dealing with youth policy in Ukraine is the Youth Development Law of 5 February 1993, repeatedly amended until 2017 (Про сприяння... 1993). The law lays down the long-term foundations of government policy for young people: respect for values, human rights, cultural heritage and history, active participation of young citizens in the development and implementation of youth policies and programmes and linking these needs with the economic opportunities of the country, access to social services and a sense of security for young people, responsibility of the country for the creation of conditions facilitating development and self-development of the young generation, as well as merging the efforts of individual ministries to benefit young people.

The main current policy issues are covered by three documents: the "Strategy for Development of National Youth Policy up to 2020", the "Roadmap for Reform: Youth Policy in Ukraine" document and the "Concept of the State Social Programme Youth of Ukraine 2016–20" (*A Roadmap for Reform...* n.d.).

The Strategy for the State Youth Policy – Development for the Period up to 2020 outlines the principles of development of a youth policy based on knowledge and research findings, the creation of more coordinated mechanisms of cooperation between individual ministries and a clear definition of the rights and obligations of young people. However, the document does not contain a plan or a schedule that would help in the implementation of the essential measures (Про Стратерію... 2013).

In connection with the post-Maidan revolution reforms in the country, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in cooperation with the Centre for Reforms, developed a more detailed policy document called *On the Road to Reforms – the Youth Policy in Ukraine for 2016–2020 (A Roadmap for Reform... n.d.)*. The document outlines the main areas of reforms, the tools for carrying them out and proposes a set of indicators measuring the effectiveness of the undertaken actions. The proposed reform primarily aims to create a dynamic sector of work with young people and to increase the participation of young people in the social, political, cultural and economic life of the country. The document (by 2020) calls for a 50% increase of young people benefiting from youth programmes (13.8% in 2015), a 20% reduction in the number of juvenile offenders, creation of better conditions for the development of entrepreneurship among young people, establishment of a comprehensive system of non-formal education and an accompanying system for training youth workers, as well as an increase in the number of young volunteers.

Two new policy documents – the “Strategy of Youth Policy in Ukraine 2030” and a new draft law on youth were developed in 2019 and remain to be adopted. It is expected that after the adoption of the law on youth, the system of youth policy in Ukraine will be significantly revised. The draft law on youth (2019 version – not published) includes provisions on both youth work and youth policy implementation, defined as activities carried out by, or together with, young people and is focused on comprehensive development. The law passed its first parliamentary reading in July 2020, second reading is expected in December 2020 (Проект Закону... 2021). Furthermore, a new strategic document “Concept of State Social Target Programme «Youth of Ukraine» 2021–2025” has been developed and was approved on 23 December 2020 (Про схвалення... 2020).

Youth policy actors (government and social partners)

Despite several changes and reforms in Ukraine’s youth policy governance in the last years, there are several government, parliamentary and civil society actors with significant influence and impact on the planning and implementation of policy.

Within the executive branch of government, the line ministry for youth policy is the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and within its structure – the Youth Policy Department. The Ministry of Youth and Sports had previously merged with the Ministry of Culture in September 2019, only to be separated from it again in March 2020. Within the legislative branch of government, the Committee for Youth and Sports operates within the parliament (Supreme Council) of Ukraine. The Committee prepares legal acts concerning matters that include family, protection of homeless persons, the demographic policy, patriotic education as well as youth policy.

A number of social partners, including local government and non-governmental organisations are important youth policy actors in Ukraine. Within Ukraine's central public administration, the institution representing the citizens in youth policy is the Public Council under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Its basic responsibilities include: promotion of the constitutional right of citizens to be engaged in government affairs, monitoring the activities of the ministry and the status of implementation of the youth policy. Members of the Council are representatives of NGOs and other institutions dealing with young people and sports. It has to be noted that the Council, albeit still defined by law, remains inactive.

Many local authorities in Ukraine have local youth policy plans/strategies as well as local youth councils active in youth policy at the local level.

Furthermore, the recently created National Youth Council of Ukraine (NYCU) operates as a representative and accountability body in youth policy at the national and international level. The NYCU has an observer status of the European Youth Forum. An important effect of NYCU's activities has been the establishment of the Eurodesk Centre Ukraine in 2018 – the first within the Eastern Partnership region².

2 Eurodesk is a network operating in 34 European countries. It is made up of organisations and institutions that work with young people, dealing with European and/or youth information. In Eurodesk there are more than 1300 organisations, of which nearly 100 are in Eurodesk Poland.

Although Ukrainian legislation does not define youth work (or the status of youth workers), the Ministry of Youth and Sports operates a large-scale national Youth Worker Programme in partnership with UNDP, providing training to youth workers since 2014 (Youth Worker Programme 2019). The Youth Worker Programme issues certificates to its graduates that are recognised at the discretion of individual organisations and institutions. The draft law on youth (2019) contains a section on the organisation of youth work in Ukraine but remains to be adopted.

Youth policy evidence base

Despite the fact that Ukraine's youth policy does not have a consolidated policy base, there are a number of public as well as independent sources contributing to the assessment and changes in the implementation of youth policy that are reflected in the annual state reports on the situation of youth submitted to the President of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and the cabinet of ministers on youth. The state reports are elaborated at the order of, and funded by, the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Reporting is overseen by the State Institute of Youth and Family Policy, an organisation under the Ministry of Youth and Sports that is mandated to carry out ongoing research and draft reports (For more information on the State Institute, see <https://dismp.gov.ua>). The Ministry allocates financial resources for preparation of the state report. The annual youth research programme, started in 2014, is usually conducted by involvement of research companies via an open tender launched by the Institute. The research covers the areas of demographic characteristics, values, family, employment, education, health, migration trends, political engagement, citizenship participation, volunteering and identity. Data from central and local executive authorities, ministries, state statistical service research institutions and the results of sociological research are used. The results of research are presented in the annual state report on youth, but there is no clear connection between research data and current policy developments.

Youth policy funding

Youth policy funding comes from multiple sources, including the state budget, local authority budgets as well as international organisations and donors.

At central government level, the key youth policy budget provision is included in the “State Target Social Programme «Youth of Ukraine» for 2016–2020” (Державної цільової... 2018). For the entire programme period of 2016–2020, the budget of the programme amounts to UAH 542 826 380 (Ukrainian hryvnia; ca. EUR 16.2 million). The 2020 annual budget is ca. EUR 3.45 million. The costs of the programme are shared between the central and regional levels; nearly two-thirds of the 2020 budget came from local budgets, and just over a third from the central budget. The programme budget is assigned mostly for youth activities (trainings and workshops, competitions, conferences, roundtables and other events), publication and other materials; less for research and methodological support. The reporting procedure requires only quantitative data identifying the number of persons participating in activities or direct beneficiaries from the actions. It should be noted that the programme budget is entirely activity-driven and no budget allocated for planning and evaluation.

The total youth policy is difficult to estimate, owing to the variety of funding sources. A number of other ministries and organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and regional and local authorities also contribute to youth policy spending. The Youth Worker Programme, run by the Ministry of Youth and Sports with contributions from UNDP and other donors, has a budget of approximately EUR 770 000 between 2014 and 2022, including a government contribution of EUR 120 000 and UNDP’s expenses at EUR 650 000. Local authorities provide substantial funding and resources but this cannot be measured in precise terms as data are not aggregated at regional and national level.

Youth organisations

Majority of young people in Ukraine (56%) do not know, are not interested, do not show a desire and interest in participating in civic life; 27.3% of young people are informed about certain forms of participation, know about different tools of participation, are hesitant and do not use them; 16.7% of young people to some extent participate in public life. The most popular forms of participation among Ukrainian youth, according to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2018, are participation in elections (56.7%) and actions to defend opinion through individual action and means of collective unorganised action. At the same time, only 2.4% indicate participation in the activities of youth and children's public organisations, 7.9% of pupils "or students" self-government bodies, 8.9% experience of volunteering, 3.6% experience of participation in the activities of youth centres. Youth participation in other forms of organised activity remains low (Молодь України 2019).

Despite all of those limitations, youth and civil society organisations remain active and relevant actors in the field of youth policy. According to the State Statistics Service, there were 5 450 officially registered youth NGOs in (7.8% of all NGOs). According to the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Science, in the past 20 years not more than 2% of the population aged 18 years and above were members of student associations or youth organisations; a poll conducted in 2015 by the GfK Ukraine institute showed 2% of members of youth organisations among respondents aged 14–34.

Besides NYCU and several established national-level youth organisations with significant membership base, including scouting organisations, there is a number of new national and umbrella youth organisations such as the Association of Youth Centers, established in 2018 (Асоціація молодіжних центрів України n.d.), Association of Youth Workers, est. in 2020 (Асоціація Молодіжних працівників України n.d.) and the Association of Youth Councils, established in 2020 (Українська Асоціація Молодіжних Рад n.d.) and National Youth Organisations Union (NUMO) (Національне українське молодіжне об'єднання n.d.).

The above-mentioned Youth Worker Programme provides nation-wide support to youth workers including those coming from youth organisations. Since the start of the Programme, more than 3 000 youth workers from 24 regions of Ukraine have been equipped with innovative tools to engage young people in civic life, policy making and decision making at local level, which is essential in view of the roll-out of Ukraine's decentralisation reform.

International cooperation and foreign donor funding

Ukraine is involved in numerous bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks for youth policy and young people.

At bilateral level, Ukraine is part of two bilateral cooperation programmes: the Polish-Ukrainian Council of Youth Exchange (Programy bilateralne... n.d.) and the Ukrainian-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Programme (Lietuvos ir Ukrainos... n.d.).

At multilateral level, Ukraine is part of several youth-related initiatives of the European Union as well as the Council of Europe and UN system organisations.

EU mobility programmes involve both Ukrainian youth and youth work professionals in exchange programmes with the EU. Between 2015–2017, EU funding enabled 5 271 students and academic staff from Ukraine to study or teach in the EU and over 9 000 young people and youth workers from Ukraine have participated in joint Erasmus+ Youth projects (exchanges, training, policy dialogue and volunteering).

Furthermore, Ukraine is taking part in four EU4Youth grant projects launched in 2018 to support skills for jobs among disadvantaged youth, as well as 21 Erasmus+ capacity-building for youth (CBY) projects.

The Framework Programme on Co-operation in the field of Youth Policy, concluded between the government of Ukraine and the Council of Europe, is part of the Council of Europe (CoE) Action Plan on Ukraine. As a result of the programme, CoE and the government jointly implement capacity-building projects and programmes for

civil servants, youth workers and other stakeholders of national youth policy (Action Plan... 2015). These activities are harmonised with the government's "Youth of Ukraine" programme.

Several United Nations agencies are involved in international cooperation with Ukraine: UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). These organisations operate in close cooperation with the government of Ukraine and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Ukrainian NGOs can also benefit from the support of the European Commission programme Erasmus+ (Ukraine is a partner country of the programme and can benefit from the programme in a limited capacity).

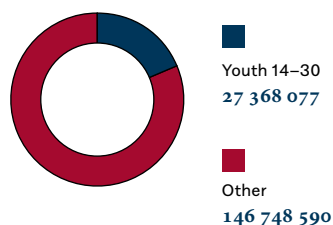
As it is the case with the CoE Framework mentioned above, in several instances local, national and international programmes inter-sect and active synergies are apparent. As a result of active joint advocacy efforts of Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine and UNDP, the donor-supported Youth Worker Programme is included in the Action Plan for Implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and Concept of Youth Development Strategy 2016–2020, and recognised at the state level (Action Plan... 2019).

Youth policy in the Russian Federation

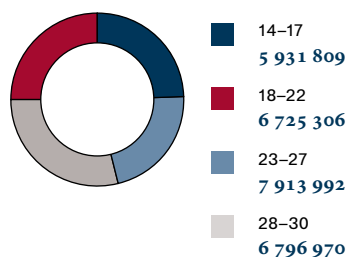
Key statistics

GDP¹: USD 1689.5 billion (2019 – World Bank)
GDP per capita: USD 11 584 (2019 – World Bank)
Population: 144 400 000 (2019 – World Bank)
Urbanisation index: 74.59% (2019 – World Bank)
Fertility rate: 1.57 (2018 – World Bank)
Youth population (14–30): 27 368 077 (2020 – ROSSTAT)
Youth population (15–29): 24 477 417 (2020 – ROSSTAT) – ca. 17%
Active voting age: 18
Passive voting age: 21 (Duma – parliament's lower house)

YOUTH SHARE IN POPULATION



YOUTH AGE STRUCTURE



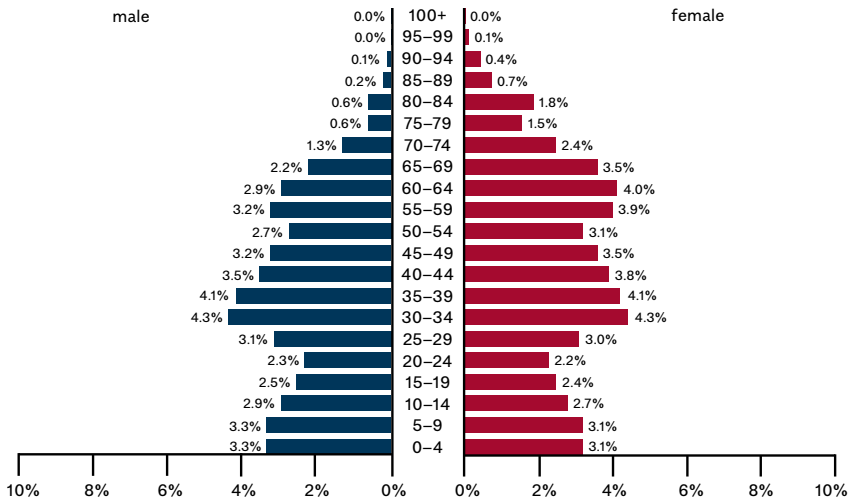
Source: ROSSTAT data for 1 January 2020, bit.ly/2Rz9IOF.

1 GDP – gross domestic product.

Population Pyramid (2020)

RUSSIAN FEDERATION 2020

POPULATION: 145 934 459



Source: populationpyramid.net.

Definition of youth

According to the 2014 “State youth policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025”, youth is defined as aged 14–30, with some exceptions and where defined by law, increasing the upper age to 35 (Об утверждении... 2014). The Federal State Statistics Service (ROSSTAT) specifies the following age groups under the umbrella category of youth: 10–14, 15–19, 20–24, 25–29.

As of January 2020, there were nearly 24.5 million young people aged 15–29 in the Russian Federation, constituting nearly 17% of the overall population of 145.9 million.

Legal basis for youth policy

The main youth policy document in Russia is the 2014 “State Youth Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025”. The aim of the strategy is to contribute to socio-economic development. It defines objectives, priorities, instruments, long-term evaluation benchmarks, parameters for youth policy investment in consideration of youth needs. The strategy places emphasis on patriotism, family, morality, justice, a healthy lifestyle and respect for nature. It takes a clear human capital approach, with emphasis on developing the key competencies of youth including innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, sociability, solidarity and efficiency. In line with this approach the measures included focus on two main areas: the transition to full labour market integration and the value orientations of young people (Об утверждении... 2014).

Youth policy actors (government and social partners)

Since 2018, youth policy implementation is under the purview of the federal government (having previously been overseen by the Ministry for Higher Education & Science, when the ministry's Department of State policy in the sphere of education of children and youth is tasked with overseeing the implementation of youth policy; Министерство науки... n.d.). The government implements federal youth policy mainly through the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (RosMolodezh), which is responsible for the implementation of the youth development strategy. The FAYA coordinates public efforts in fostering youth opportunity and development and takes a human capital approach.

As Russia is a federal state, some aspects of youth policy are further devolved to regional “subjects”, which have their own state youth authorities, and youth policy action (Направления n.d.).

Russian youth organisations are represented at federal level by the National Youth Council of Russia. Founded in 1992, NYCR includes over 50 all-Russian and inter-regional organisations and 32 Regional Youth Councils and is the most representative youth structure in Russia, recognised by the State and international

structures. Its main role is to support the activities of its members to achieve the rights of children and youth. It further serves as a system of coordination and consultation for youth and children's organisations. The NYCR is a full member of the European Youth Forum.

Youth policy evidence base

Evidence for youth policy in the Russian Federation is coordinated by federal agency Rosmolodezh and provided by several different institutions. Statistics about state youth policy are published online and in print (Статистика 2020).

Regular research on youth is conducted by several public and private research institutions, including: All-Russian centre of Public Opinion Research; Foundation "Public Opinion", Levada Centre, Institute of Sociology of Russian Academy of Science, Centre of Youth Research of Higher School of Economics in Saint Petersburg, Moscow State University, and several others.

Each federal subject (region) has its own department dealing with state youth policy and each region has its own law on it, which defines planning and monitoring procedures. Example from Nizhny Novgorod region (Федеральные... n.d.).

Rosmolodezh regularly publishes both analytical evidence as well as planning documents on its website:

- » analysis (Документы n.d.a),
- » planning (Документы n.d.b).

Youth policy funding

According to Russia's federal budgetary law, the total budget of RosMolodezh for 2020 is RUB 16 409 099 800 (Russian ruble; ca. EUR 179 million) – (Федеральный закон... 2019).

At regional level, each regional administration has its own Committee on Youth Policy and interaction with Public Organizations

with its own annual regional budget. For example in St. Petersburg, the budget of the regional Committee is RUB 1 103 319 500 (ca. EUR 12 million) – (О бюджете... 2019).

A number of other governmental ministries, agencies and departments run programmes for and with youth – such as “Youth policy” programmes from Ministry of Culture or Federal project “Modern School” from Ministry of Education.

Youth organisations

As of 2018, there were 8207 youth organisations in Russia, according to the monitoring evidence consolidated by Ros-Molodezh (*Федеральное статистическое наблюдение...*). Most of them are active in three thematic areas: healthy lifestyle and sports, volunteering activities and patriotic education. Majority of organisations are registered in the biggest cities such as Moscow, St Petersburg, Yekaterinburg and Novossibirsk. The largest youth organisation in the Russian Federation is Russian Union of Youth with over 100 000 members and 77 regional organisations, 16 federal programmes and 200 regional and local projects as of 2020 (Российский Союз n.d.).

Since 2014 volunteering has become large part of youth policy in Russia, when Association of Volunteering centres (AVCFR) was established. This is the largest volunteering organisation in the country, coordinating resources and activities of all-size volunteering organisations across the country (Ассоциация волонтерских центров n.d.).

International cooperation and foreign donor funding

Russian Federation is involved in numerous bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks for youth and youth policy.

In order to fulfill international obligations in the field of youth cooperation, the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia interacts with the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (within the framework of the Youth Council

of the CIS member states, bilateral interaction), the Council of Europe, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan and France.

The main goals of the development of international youth co-operation are strengthening friendship, interaction and mutual understanding of peoples, developing cooperation between representatives of youth public organisations and students of Russia and the countries participating in events, creating conditions for the formation of international youth projects and programmes (Министерство науки... n.d.).

Russia is part of the German-Russian Youth Exchange Programme, based on a 2004 inter-governmental agreement (Stiftung Deutsch-Russischer Jugendaustausch n.d.).

The Russian-Japanese Commission on Youth Exchanges was established in 1999. As part of the implementation of youth exchanges, about 70 bilateral youth events are held annually. The key events were joint youth forums that are held annually in Russia and Japan. In 2018, the forums were held under the auspices of the Year of Russia in Japan and the Year of Japan in Russia (Министерство науки... n.d.).

The bilateral youth agreement with France also focuses on development of youth exchanges (Соглашение... 2008).

A number of youth events and programmes are also delivered through the Union of Russia and Belarus and its youth programme (Политика, экономика и инновации 2016).

There are several other agreements at bilateral and international levels:

- » with Armenia (Соглашение... n.d.);
- » with the Caribbean Regional Youth Council and NYCR (*Memorandum of Understanding...* 2017a);
- » with Namibia (*Agreement...* 2016);
- » with Pan-African Youth Union (*Memorandum of Understanding...* 2017b);
- » Interaction with Azerbajdzan on different levels: big-scale youth forums to local master-classes and training courses (*Молодёжное сотрудничество...* 2019).

At the multilateral level, Russia is part of several youth-related initiatives including the EU, Council of Europe and CIS.

The Council of Europe and Russian government bodies responsible for the implementation of youth policy in the Russian Federation have been cooperating in the field of youth policy since 1992. The main objectives of this co-operation are to support the development of youth policy at federal and regional levels and to provide assistance to non-governmental youth organisations, as well as to draw attention to interaction among government structures and public organisations. In the past, training courses, including long-term courses, were held for youth leaders, seminars on the situation of children's and youth public organisations, as well as a number of training courses on the situation of young people and the youth policy in the federal districts of the Russian Federation. In addition, Russia's representatives took part in seminars held by international youth organisations, language courses and training organised by the Council of Europe youth sector. The co-operation between the parties was developed over a period of time. The first joint plan of action was signed in 2003, with subsequent plans in 2006–2008, 2009–2012 and a Framework programme for co-operation in the field of youth policy for 2014–2018. (Council of Europe n.d.).

The Commonwealth of Independent States has its own strategy of international youth cooperation. Within this mechanism, Russia implements projects for the development of youth

relations – the latest CIS youth cooperation strategy covers the period 2010–2020 (*Стратегия международного молодёжного сотрудничества...* 2010).

European Union mobility programmes involve both Russian youth and youth work professionals in exchange programmes with the EU. Between 2015–2017, EU funding enabled 6 367 students and academic staff from Russia to study or teach in the EU and over 2 000 young people and youth workers from Russia have participated in joint Erasmus+ Youth projects (exchanges, training, policy dialogue and volunteering).

Societal challenges involving young people and youth organisations in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation

Due to their great demographic, economic, ethnic, religious and geographic diversity, young people in the Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation are struggling with a range of diverse challenges, notably those related to the systems of government, democracy, human rights, economic and social issues and in active or frozen conflicts.

The societies of the Eastern Partnership countries and Russian Federation are relatively young, compared to the European Union countries (see below).

Table 1. Median age in Eastern Partnership, the Russian Federation and EU countries

Armenia	35.1
Azerbaijan	32.3
Belarus	40.0
Georgia	38.1
Moldova	36.7
Russia	39.6
Ukraine	40.6
EU	42.6

Source: CIA World Factbook, Eurostat.

However, birth rates in all Eastern Partnership countries and Russian Federation remain low. The result is the problem of simple replacement of generations, with its negative impact on the system of education, pensions and the labour market. The number of students of higher-education institutions may decline, while employers may experience staff shortages.

Table 2. Fertility rates in Eastern Partnership, the Russian Federation and EU countries in 2017/2018

Armenia	1.8
Azerbaijan	1.7
Belarus	1.7
Georgia	2.1
Moldova	1.3
Russia	1.6
Ukraine	1.4
EU	1.59

Source: World Bank, Eurostat.

Another challenge facing the Eastern Partnership countries and Russia is young people entering the labour market and working out a synergy between the system of education and the needs of the employers. Across all of the countries listed, there is a relatively high unemployment rate among young people (e.g. 35.5% in Armenia, or 30.5% in Georgia – see details below) and a relatively low activeness in the labour market. As in the case of several Western Europe countries, the skills mismatch can also be observed in the Eastern Partnership region. Young graduates miss skills and competences required on the labour market. It is therefore difficult for young people to find employment corresponding to their education, which often results in underemployment and/or overqualification, migration from smaller towns to big cities, or even economic emigration of highly skilled youth to other countries of the region and beyond it. The last two trends, combined with the quickly ageing societies, pose a challenge to governments and societies. At the same time, in some Eastern Partnership countries an inflow of economic migrants and refugees can be noted (e.g. Syrian refugees in Armenia or international economic migrants to Russia). The situation of ethnic minorities and their integration with society pose a number of challenges as well (e.g. the Roma community in Ukraine or the Armenian community in Georgia).

Table 3. Youth unemployment (age range: 15–24) in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation in 2019

Armenia	35.5
Azerbaijan	14.6
Belarus	9.7
Georgia	30.5
Moldova	12.5
Russia	16.1
Ukraine	18.8
EU	16.8

Source: World Bank.

A separate problem are the unresolved conflicts affecting four countries – Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine. The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, the secession of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Transnistria and part of Donbas as well as the annexation of Crimea, lead to the forced resettlement of more than 2.5 million people. The unresolved conflicts have their impact on the social and economic situation of young people, especially on their educational and professional lives.

Health protection of young people and promoting a healthy lifestyle with sports also pose many challenges (particular emphasis should be placed on fighting obesity), as does the fight against addiction and promotion of health education (e.g. concerning persons with HIV and the matter of their social acceptance). Many young people also have poor access to housing, resulting in postponed plans to get married and have children.

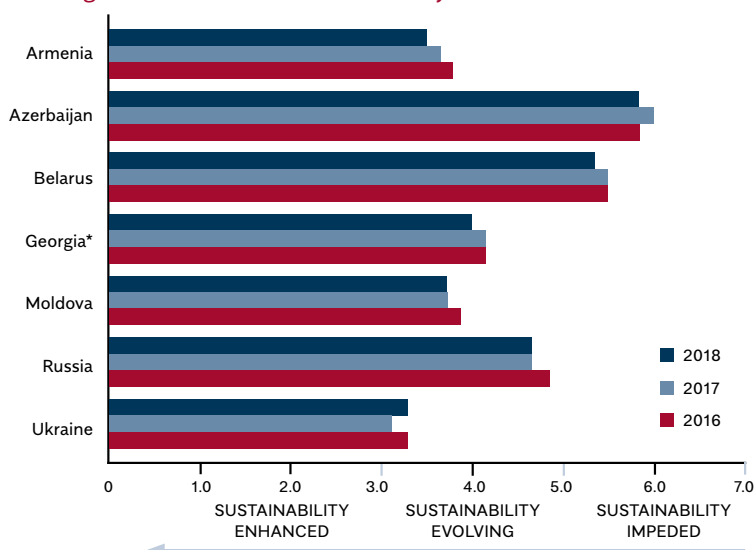
Challenges faced by young people across Eastern Partnership and Russian Federation are exacerbated by low levels of youth participation in social, economic and cultural lives of their countries and communities, contributing to lack of appropriate solutions generated by young people themselves. Young people from rural areas and distant mountain regions are particularly vulnerable since they rarely take part in democratic processes such as elections and do not become involved in social issues of their village, region or country.

Substantial efforts by governments, civil societies and the international community are required to increase the levels of participation of young people from Eastern Partnership countries and Russian Federation, particularly with regards to young people with fewer opportunities who are disadvantaged economically and geographically.

Vibrant and active civil society has been critical in supporting young people in the above-mentioned areas, as it has increased public accountability, advanced human rights and local development, and ensured service delivery to the whole population, including vulnerable groups.

According to Civil Society Organisation Sustainability Index, the sustainability scores of civil society organisations, including youth organisations, in the region show symptoms of stability and, in some cases, slight improvement (2018 Civil society... 2019). Ukraine is the country with the strongest sustainability rates in the region, even though the situation in 2018 worsened as opposed to 2017. The scores of Armenia and Republic of Moldova improved between 2016–2018 and the countries with the lowest levels of sustainability remain Belarus and Azerbaijan (both showing some improvements in 2018).

Figure 1. Eurasia CSO sustainability



* Please, note that some of the dimension-level scores were recalibrated in 2018; see country report for more details.

Source: 2018 Civil society... 2019.

Civil society organisations in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation

Apart from the government authorities, responsible for the legal basis as well as financing youth policy, civil society actors, especially civil society organisations (CSOs) are very important actors in youth policy. All across Eastern Partnership and Russian Federation, civil society organisations are often created by young people and operating for their benefit. One can observe two trends in the approach of the authorities of the Eastern Partnership countries and Russian Federation to cooperation with civil society:

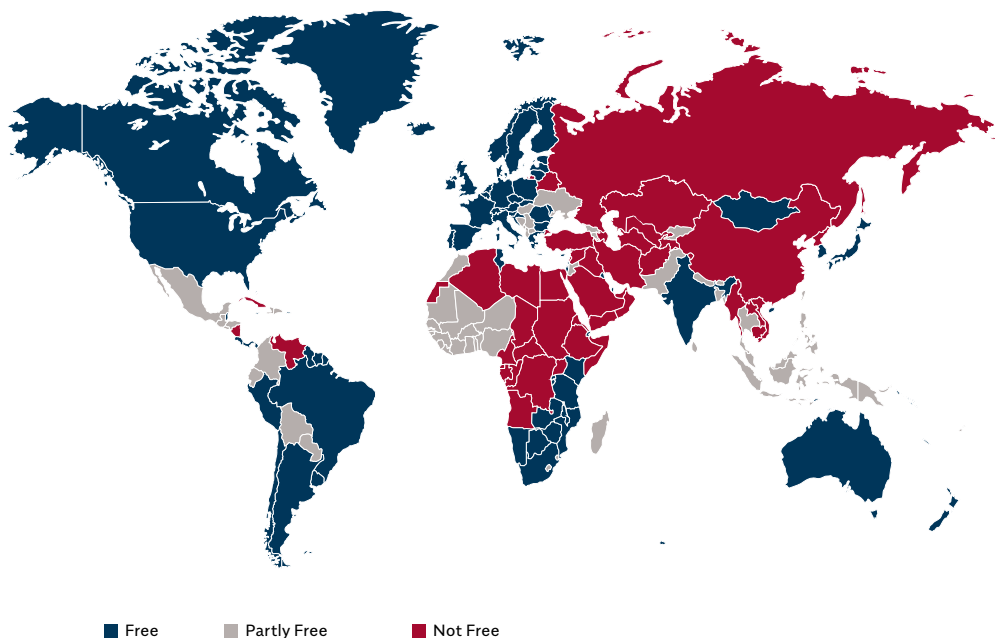
- » a permissive approach, with broad government incentives for youth organisations to take up initiatives and with numerous incentives for the sector of non-governmental organisations, without obstruction of activities financed with foreign funds (Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine);
- » a fundamental approach, with control of the activity of youth organisations financed with foreign funds, with strong influence and at times limitation of their activity (Azerbaijan, Belarus and the Russian Federation).

Permissive approach

In Georgia, civil society enjoys relatively high levels of freedom of operation and co-operation between central and local government authorities and youth organisations is commonplace. Youth civil society organisations are explicitly referred to in the National Youth Policy Document (2014), while the development of their cooperation with the authorities was overseen by the Interministerial Coordination Council, established under the (now defunct) Ministry of Sports and Youth. What is important is that the government activities for youth policy development,

including cooperation with civil society organisations, can be monitored through CSOs and government bodies – including an open platform (Youth Platform n.d.).

Map 1. Freedom in the World Map 2020



Source: Freedom House 2021.

According to Freedom House’s annual Freedom in the World Report (a global overview of the state of democracy and freedom in all countries of the world – see Map 1), Georgia is a “partly free” country (with a score of 61 points out of 100 in 2020; 100 is the highest score, equalling with full democratic freedoms; 0 is the lowest score and represents lack thereof). The report notes the relatively good state of civil society development and CSO capacity in Georgia. The number of such organisations is growing, but they are mostly gathered around the country’s capital Tbilisi. Some of the CSOs (or NGOs) are partners in the legislative process, but others are criticised by those in power as well as by the opposition. Georgian CSOs readily accept foreign financial support, including

from international donors: USAID, the European Union, the Open Society Foundations, the European Endowment for Democracy, the Black Sea Trust, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, or the World Bank.

Moldova has recently made good progress in creating a relatively supportive environment for the development of civil society, including youth organisations. An important step in this direction was the appointment in 1999–2001 of youth workers in every locality and in every administrative region (*raion*). Unfortunately, in 2001, the territorial reform was suspended and the youth workers previously hired have been dismissed. However, the activities of Moldovan authorities for young people were continued and Moldova implemented youth strategies in 2003, 2009 and 2014. The last strategy (2014–2020) places great emphasis on the development of systems of support for young people, such as e.g. youth centres or health centres, and on strengthening the youth sector through consolidation and interministerial cooperation.

The Freedom House report considers Moldova to be a partly free country (60 points out of 100 in 2020). NGOs are not repressed (the situation in this respect has been systematically improving since 2009), there is freedom of association and expression of opinions. Civil society organisations have played a key role in the public debate on the 2015 banking scandal. The NGO sector in Moldova is largely dependent on external financing (with the exception of large organisations of international range, such as AIESEC Moldova). Thus, most organisations are in 80–90% financed by such organisations and institutions as: USAID, the US Embassy, the East-Europe Foundation, the Soros Foundation, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, or the European Union.

In Armenia, although non-governmental organisations encounter certain difficulties, particularly financial ones, a good climate for cooperation between the authorities and the third sector can be noted (including CSOs working with young people) especially since the 2018 change of power. The right to associate in civil society organisations is enshrined in the Constitution of Armenia (art. 28), whereas the activities of NGOs are well regulated by law (the 2001 Law on Nongovernmental Organisations has helped in this as well).

Freedom House considers Armenia to be a partly free country (53 points out of 100 in 2020). The law guarantees freedom of association, but CSOs have a limited influence on political decisions and a great obstacle in the third sector-government relations is corruption. The main problem, faced not only by youth organisations but also the entire third sector, is the lack of financial stability. Therefore, Armenian civil society organisations resort to funds from foreign donors, such as: UNDP, UNICEF, USAID, the World Bank, the US Embassy, the British Council, Save the Children International, the European Union or OSCE.

According to the Freedom House Foundation Report, Ukraine is a partly free country as well (62 points in 2020), while civil society organisations have a large influence on the implementation of reforms by government actors. In recent years, Ukrainian law has been increasing opportunities for civic activeness through the implementation of the e-petition system and a participation budget. The National Strategy for the Development of Civil Society for 2016-2020 was adopted in 2015, also providing for the implementation of an effective mechanism of state financing of civil initiatives.

Fundamental approach

In Belarus, governmental authorities exercise strict control over civil society, including youth organisations. The Belarusian Committee for Youth Organisations is recognised by the authorities as the sole official youth council, yet does not carry on regular activities and is used by the authorities for political purposes (e.g. during the 2015 presidential election it was responsible for preparing and publishing exit polls among students). The Belarusian National Youth Council (RADA), in turn, was the first registered youth council after the fall of the Eastern Bloc. Although no longer officially registered in Belarus and lacking government recognition, it brings together over 20 organisations and informal groups and is a member of the European Youth Forum. The biggest youth organisation in Belarus is the Belarusian Republican Youth League (BRSM), with about 500 000 members. BRSM receives considerable state funding for its activity, thanks to which it is one of the most important

partners of the authorities in the implementation of the youth policy in Belarus.

Freedom House considers Belarus “not free” with a score of 19 points in 2020. The authorities exercise control there particularly over organisations they do not favour. There have been cases of closing down the most critical civil society organisations and prosecution of their activists. There are also serious limitations in obtaining foreign financing as well as registration of grants already obtained.

Russia has a very similar score (20/100) and is also classified as “not free”. Russian government exercises high levels of control over civil society, including youth organisations.

The National Youth Council of Russia (NYCR), founded in 1992, is the largest umbrella organisation of youth civil society organisations in the country. NYCR comprises more than 50 youth organisations — all-Russian, interregional public children and youth organisations, regional associations (round tables) of youth and children associations. NYCR presents itself as the “most representative body of youth and children’s organisations in the Russian Federation, recognised as such both on the national and international levels” and is a member of the European Youth Forum (National Youth Council of Russia n.d.).

Russia has a thriving youth organisations scene with numerous youth organisations at national, regional and local level. Many organisations have wide membership – e.g. the Russian Union of Youth (RSM/RUY), founded as a successor to Komsomol, has 115 thousand members all across Russia (Российский Союз Молодежи n.d.). Despite this diversity and wider membership, activities of youth organisations are subject to restrictions and surveillance severely limiting the operations of independent organisations especially those questioning the political status quo. The government limits the activities of all civil society organisations through legal means – e.g. classifying them as “foreign agents” (i.e. receiving foreign donor funding) or undesirable organisations, fining them for breaches of administrative procedures, and intimidating them with police raids and arrests of activists and members (Human Rights Watch n.d.).

The greatest level of government control over the civil society sector (and its youth organisations) among countries described in this report is applied in Azerbaijan. Between 2014 and 2015, a series of laws was introduced to reduce corruption and counteract money laundering by Azerbaijani NGOs receiving foreign support and to disable foreign financing of anti-government initiatives. The official reason for introducing these laws was the need to implement transparent rules for operation of the third sector. In practice, seeking any foreign funds became nearly impossible. Cases of freezing bank accounts of NGOs were not uncommon, as were excessive tax audits and other ways of persecution of civil society activists. As a result, civil society activities, particularly of large organisations, are severely restricted. Smaller organisations have remained very active at grass-root level. On the other hand, youth organisations as well as other CSOs can obtain generous domestic funding, e.g. from the Council on State Support to Non-Governmental Organisations, the Azerbaijani Youth Foundation, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, or the State Labour and Social Support Fund and other state and quasi-state organisations.

Azerbaijan is classified by Freedom House as “not free” (10 points out of 100 in 2020). Freedom of association is highly restricted and since 2016, association is prohibited in the case of individuals and entities that disturb public order and morale (where these two definitions are very extensive and in practice any organisation or individual that criticises the authorities loses the right to associate).

Selected transnational youth policy support mechanisms

Erasmus+ Programme

Erasmus+ is a European Union programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sports supporting both formal and non-formal education projects. It has been designed to help EU member states and other countries cope with the social and economic changes or the main challenges facing Europe. These include: the fight against youth unemployment, greater integration of Europe's societies, the development of social capital of young people, the creation and development of efficiently functioning systems of education and training, as well as the social inclusion of persons from disadvantaged environments, including newly arrived migrants.

Youth organisations can obtain funds from the Erasmus+ Youth component, within which financing can be obtained for projects in the following fields:

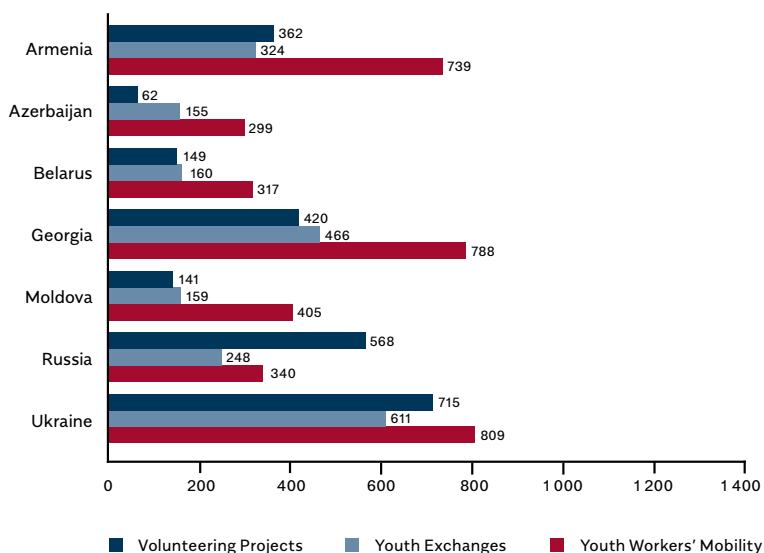
- » learning mobility (Key Action 1), i.e. youth exchanges, mobility of youth workers, or volunteering projects;
- » cooperation for innovation and good practices (Key Action 2), i.e. strategic partnerships and international youth initiatives;
- » support for reforms in education (Key Action 3), i.e. youth policy development projects.

The following can take part in the programme:

- » countries of the programme (European Union countries and North Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey);
- » EU's neighbouring partner countries (countries of the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership, the southern region of the Mediterranean Sea and the Russian Federation);
- » other partner countries.

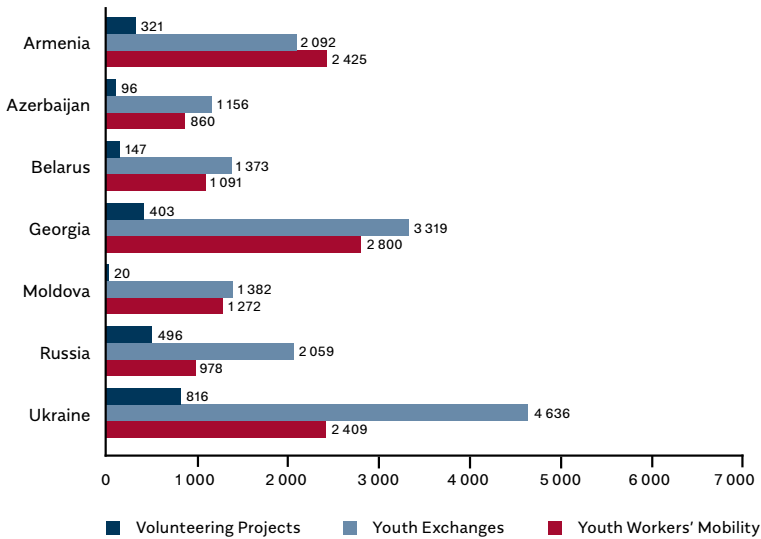
The EU's neighbouring partner countries can participate in two sectors of the Erasmus+ programme (higher education and youth) as well as in eTwinning+ programme. The vast majority of projects, implemented with young people and youth workers from Eastern Partnership countries and Russian Federation is implemented within Erasmus+ Key Action 1. It is also the Action with the highest budget, however, according to the Erasmus+ programme guide, the limit of budget allocation for projects with neighbouring partner countries cannot exceed 25%, which results in limiting the number of projects financed.

Figure 1. Number of Erasmus+ projects implemented between 2014 and 2019 by country and by type of activity



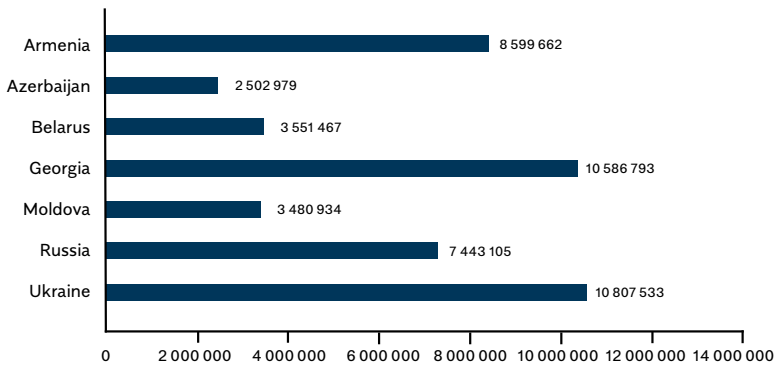
Source: SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre.

Figure 2. Number of project participants from Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation, by country and by type of activity (2014–2019)



Source: SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre.

Figure 3. Approximate cumulative budgets of projects implemented between 2014 and 2019 by country and by type of activity (in EUR)



Source: SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre.

In 2017 the European Commission relaunched the Eastern Partnership Youth Window. The organisations from Eastern Partnership countries were given the right to apply for financing of their projects to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). This applies to two kinds of projects within the Key Action 2: Civil society Fellowships for Youth and Partnership for Entrepreneurship. The aim of the Fellowships is to contribute to capacity building of youth organisations and youth workers through promoting and facilitating relations with partner organisations, public bodies or civil society organisations. The selected young leaders (Fellows) can increase their skills and competences in the field of policy making through educational mobility and work for EU institutions. Such activities need to be implemented within the educational mobility based on non-formal education principles. The Partnership for Entrepreneurship projects aims at supporting youth entrepreneurship education as well as youth social entrepreneurship ventures. These projects need to be based on non-formal education principles and on a multilateral partnership of organisations active in the field of business. The European Commission assigned a budget of EUR 9 million (60% for Civil society Fellowships for Youth and 40% for Partnership for Entrepreneurship).

European Solidarity Corps

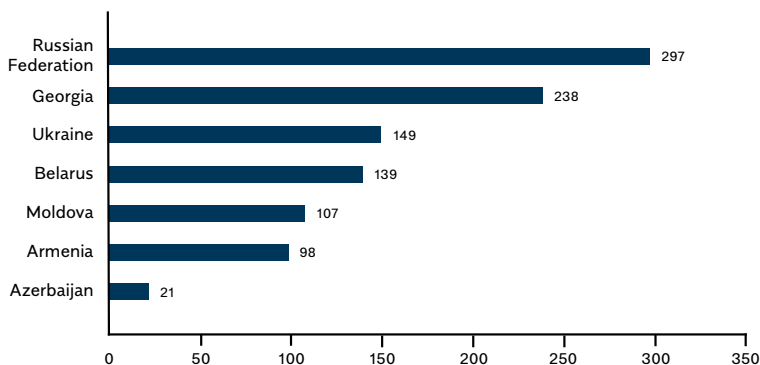
The European Solidarity Corps is the new EU initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe. Initially, the European Solidarity Corps was designed for European Union countries only, however after repeated signals stating that European solidarity cannot be limited by EU borders, the new initiative was also made available for EU neighbouring partner countries, including the Eastern Partnership region. The European Solidarity Corps is divided into two types of activities:

- » Volunteering activities,
- » Solidarity projects.

Individual volunteering activities are full-time unpaid solidarity activities for a duration from 2 to 12 months. In some cases, volunteering activities of 2 weeks to 2 months can be put in place for young people with fewer opportunities. This type of solidarity activity will give young people the chance to take part in the daily work of organisations and perform tasks that can have a real impact. Volunteering teams are solidarity activities allowing teams of 10 to 40 European Solidarity Corps participants from at least two different countries to volunteer together for a period between 2 weeks and 2 months. Such solidarity activities could especially contribute to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the European Solidarity Corps. Jobs are solidarity activities for young people, for a period from 3 to 12 months, paid by the participating organisation employing the European Solidarity Corps participant. The financial support to participating organisations offering jobs shall not exceed twelve months in cases when the duration of the employment contract exceeds twelve months. Such jobs shall include a learning and training component and be based on a written employment contract, which respects all the terms and conditions of employment as defined in national law or applicable collective agreements, or both, of the country in which the job is being carried out. Traineeships are periods of full-time work practice of between 2 to 6 months renewable once for a maximum duration of 12 months within the same participating organisation. This type of solidarity activity should include a learning and training component, to help the participant gain relevant experience with a view to developing competences useful for personal, educational, social, civic and professional development. It should be based on a written traineeship agreement concluded at the beginning of the traineeship in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework of the country where the traineeship takes place. Traineeships must not substitute jobs and should be remunerated by the host organisations. Solidarity projects are set up and carried out by groups of at least five European Solidarity Corps participants, with a view to addressing key challenges within their communities while presenting a clear European added value. Projects can last from 2 to 12 months and must take place in the country of residence of project participants. A solidarity project should be directly linked to the local community young participants live in to respond to the issues and challenges around them, although

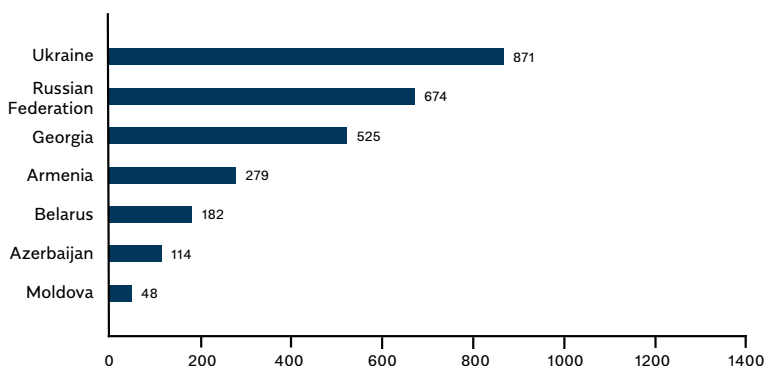
some of the projects can also tackle regional or even national issues. Together with addressing the local challenges, a solidarity project should also clearly demonstrate European added value by addressing priorities identified at European level. A solidarity project should reflect a common concern for issues within the European society, such as for example integrating third-country nationals, climate change or democratic participation.

Figure 4. Number of European Solidarity Corps projects hosted in a given country (2018–2020)



Source: Foundation for the Development of the Education System.

Figure 5. Number of European Solidarity Corps volunteers sent from a given country (2018–2020)



Source: Foundation for the Development of the Education System.

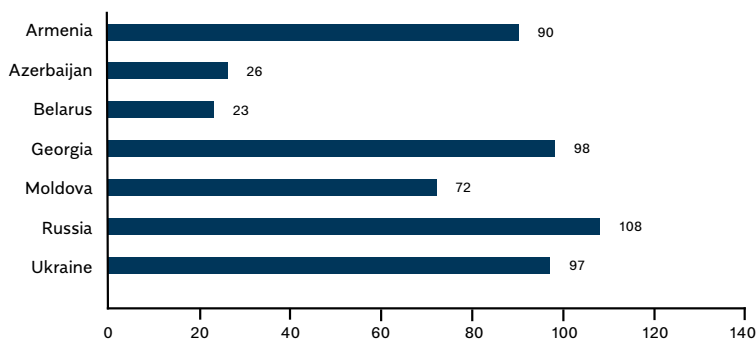
SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre

The SALTO EECA Resource Centre (Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities in Eastern Europe and Caucasus) was established by the European Commission, with the support of the Ministry of National Education and Sports of Poland, at the close of 2003, within the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (acting as the Polish National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme and European Solidarity Corps). The SALTO EECA Resource Centre is supervised by the European Commission and the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Poland. SALTO EECA belongs to the network of six SALTO YOUTH resource centres located in various European Union countries. A common goal of this network is to raise the quality of youth projects and to support organisations working with young people and the National Agencies of the Erasmus+ programme, by providing information and through training activities. The SALTO EECA Resource Centre supports the development of non-formal education and raising skills to benefit from the Erasmus+ programme in the Youth sector, in the Eastern Partnership countries and in the Russian Federation. The main objectives of the Centre are as follows:

- » promotion of the Erasmus+ Youth programme and non-formal education in the Eastern Partnership countries and in the Russian Federation;
- » raising the quality of learning mobility projects for young people and youth workers, through the organisation of training and seminars, and particularly supporting the quality of actions of volunteering projects (accreditation system, training for volunteers and coordinators, monitoring visits, information events);
- » supporting National Agencies of the Erasmus+ programme in the Youth sector, in the field of development of international cooperation between organisations from the European Union and organisations from the Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation.

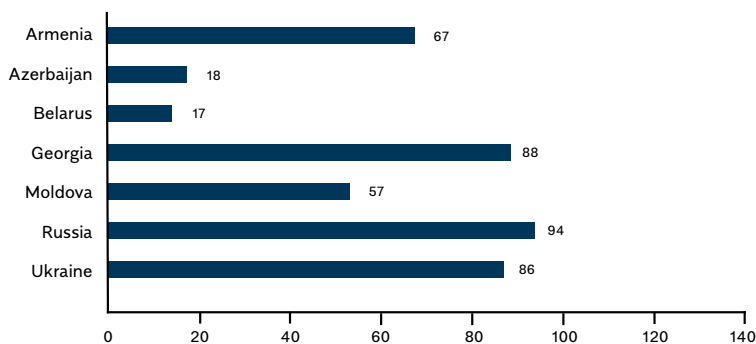
One of the principal objectives of SALTO EECA is providing support for international volunteer services. From 2011, SALTO EECA has been responsible for accreditation of organisations ready to host and send volunteers within the European Voluntary Services (currently: European Solidarity Corps projects). Between 2014–2020, SALTO EECA has carried out 514 accreditations and awarded positively 426 organisations for at least one year and at most until the end of 2020, i.e. until the end of the Erasmus+ programme. Over 82% of accreditation requests concluded with a positive decision.

Figure 6. Number of EVS/ESC accreditations in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation in 2014–2020



Source: SALTO EECA.

Figure 7. Number of accredited EVS/ESC organisations in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation 2014–2020



Source: SALTO EECA.

eTwinning Plus Programme

eTwinning is a community of schools, pupils and teachers cooperating using online tools. It is composed of teachers of all subjects working with young people aged 3–19, including also librarians or school psychologists who jointly implement educational projects. The programme has been operating since 2005 and since then has gathered almost 400 000 teachers all over Europe. Even though the eTwinning programme is mainly dedicated to schools, its projects very often use non-formal education methods. Moreover, in many cases the online cooperation is just a first step before establishing a real life cooperation, for example within the Erasmus+ programme, resulting in youth exchanges or volunteering activities for young people. In 2013 eTwinning was expanded to include the pilot programme eTwinning Plus and opened for schools and teachers from: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The initiative was created in compliance with the European Neighbourhood Policy. With the development of eTwinning Plus, other countries were accepted: Tunisia and Jordan. eTwinning plus made it possible for schools from Eastern Partnership countries (except for Belarus) to use online technologies and become familiar with non-formal education methods. The National eTwinning Office in Poland, operating within the framework of the Foundation for the Development of the Education System, has been supporting eTwinning offices since the beginning, in the countries included in the eTwinning Plus Programme (PSA – Partner Support Agencies). In 2014 the pilot programme for eTwinning Plus countries ended and the principles of cooperation were established, thanks to which teachers from these countries are now full participants of the eTwinning Programme. From the very beginning, a very important element has been the transfer of knowledge and know-how to the countries taking the first steps in the programme. For this end, the National eTwinning Office in Poland, in cooperation with the Central Support Service (CSS), organised special meetings (also online) with PSA representatives, along with training, study visits and international seminars. The organisation of international contact seminars, training and workshops is one form of cooperation regularly offered by the National eTwinning Office in Poland. So far, there have been visits of teachers from Armenia and Georgia. The meetings help teachers from eTwinning Plus countries establish and maintain

contacts, and the organisers to develop international eTwinning projects. Another form of cooperation between the National Office and the PSA is international webinars between teachers from Poland and teachers from eTwinning Plus countries. The purpose of these internet meetings is to find a partner for cooperation in a project and to register the project on the eTwinning platform. This training form is addressed to teachers who are beginners in the programme. During a webinar, teachers become acquainted with the programme assumptions, the eTwinning platform and its tools. Examples of already implemented model projects are presented, contacts are made and ideas for projects are put forward. International project groups are created, where teachers plan and register projects.

EU4Youth Programme

The EU4Youth Programme is a European Union programme for 2017–2020 that aims at fostering active participation of young people in society and their employability, by developing youth leadership and entrepreneurship through a variety of actions, including capacity building, fellowships, support to policy dialogue, as well as providing grants to organisations active in these areas. It covers Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and its budget amounts to EUR 22 750 000.

The objectives of the EU4Youth programme are to:

- » increase the employability and participation of young people in society and the economy;
- » support them to become active citizens and entrepreneurs, and to develop skills;
- » enable youth organisations to participate in the policy dialogue and to cooperate with public and private bodies and institutions, bringing together relevant authorities with other key stakeholders;
- » support disadvantaged youth and women.

EU4Youth has three components:

Component 1: Capacity building – Eastern Partnership Youth Window – Erasmus+ projects

- » Civil society fellowships for youth – Capacity building projects supporting youth organisations to become active participants in policy-development and policy making. Selected young leaders (the “Fellows”) take part in mobility activities and work in the EU;
- » Partnerships for entrepreneurship – Capacity building projects promoting entrepreneurship education and social entrepreneurship among young people. These transnational projects are based on multilateral partnerships between organisations. The involvement of the private sector and educational institutions is particularly important.

Component 2: Grant scheme – focus on disadvantaged youth and youth entrepreneurship:

- » increase educational and training opportunities and improve employment perspectives for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people;
- » capacity building projects addressing educational and training opportunities for youth, with dedicated activities for disadvantaged youth, access to finance, employability, accessibility to labour markets;
- » support creative young people to bring their entrepreneurial ideas to maturity;
- » support leaders in the education field, who offer quality education to young people, including those from the most disadvantaged families and areas;
- » focus on economic sectors with higher appeal to youth – i.e. innovation & IT, creative industries, green economy, and social entrepreneurship.

Component 3: Coordination

Ensure coordination among the EU4Youth components, and support monitoring and visibility for the entire programme.

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The publication presents key youth policy developments in Eastern Partnership countries and in the Russian Federation. It also focuses on challenges that young people and youth organisations from the region face, and presents selected foreign mechanisms of youth policy support.

Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE) is the Polish National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme for the years 2021–2027. It is also responsible for other European educational and information initiatives in Poland, such as eTwinning, Eurodesk, Eurydice, Europass and EPALE. The Foundation also supports co-operation with countries in the East via the Polish-Lithuanian Youth Exchange Fund, the Polish Ukrainian Council of Youth Exchange and SALTO-EECA Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre. Since 2014, FRSE has been involved in the implementation of the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (PO WER). The Foundation organizes many educational events including competitions promoting projects' results. It coordinates the European Youth Week and co-organizes events in the framework of the European Day of Languages. It also conducts research and its Publishing House issues, among others, such quarterly magazines as "Języki Obce w Szkole" ("Foreign Languages at School") and "Europa dla Aktywnych" ("Europe for the Active").