



**Youth Participation Index 2018**

**Monitoring report  
of Political, Social and Economic  
Participation of Youth 2018**

## Impressum

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## Summary

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

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*NGO Prima – Montenegro*  
*Partners Albania for Change and Development – Albania*  
*Community Volunteers Foundation – Turkey*  
*Association for Education – MLADIINFO International – North Macedonia*

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

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

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

## About Youth Participation Index (YPI)

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

Advantages of the YPI are:

1. It can summarize complex, multidimensional data
2. It is easier to interpret than many separate indicators
3. It can assess progress over time
4. It provides a mechanism for cross-country comparisons

Disadvantages of the YPI are:

1. It may send misleading policy messages if poorly constructed or misinterpreted
2. The choice of indicators is limited to the data that is systematically collected annually and processed in the same way in all countries.

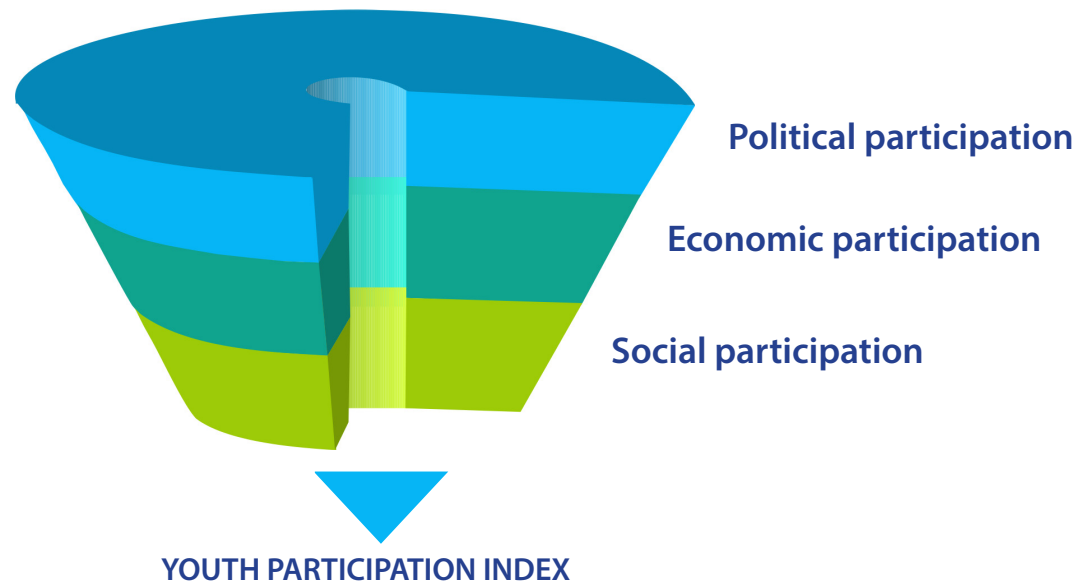
The main advantages of the YPI are that it is simple and easy to understand. The message which is being communicated should be apprehensible to everybody and should produce an effect on decision-makers. On the other hand, the YPI could oversimplify complex issues and be misleading. Considering all the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

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

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

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

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

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

The YPI is created by the Youth Bank Hub as a non-governmental initiative, not by a public institution or government. The data were already collected by the State or as a part of other official statistics. The purpose of this Index is to assess the already available statistics over time. Despite all constraints, YBH created the YPI and has continued to advocate for the youth-sensitive data in order to draw attention to the status of youth.

# Tracking data in the region Indicators per dimensions

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION – INDICATORS	AVAILABLE DATA
1. Young government ministers	Yes
2. Young government deputy ministers	Yes
3. Young MPs	Yes
4. Young mayors	Partially*
5. On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of government and parliament <sup>1</sup>	Yes
6. On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of municipalities <sup>2</sup>	Partially*
7. Existence of youth network (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) at the national level	Yes
8. Existence of youth network (councils/parliaments/unions/offices) at local levels	Partially*
<i>*Data not available for Turkey</i>	
The data on political participation are mostly available. The main difficulty regarding this dimension is the lack of data on local levels in Turkey. The reason is the fact that Turkey has 2951 municipalities so the manual counting of online tools and youth networks is not possible, while official statistics do not exist.	
ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION - INDICATORS	AVAILABLE DATA
1. NEET rate	Yes
2. Youth unemployment rate	Yes
3. Long-term youth unemployment rate	Yes
4. Youth labor force participation rate	Yes
5. Youth employment rate	Yes
6. Young people that started their own business with the financial support of the state	Partially*
7. Self-employed young people	Partially**
<i>*Data not available for Turkey and Montenegro, **Data not available for Turkey</i>	
SOCIAL PARTICIPATION - INDICATORS	AVAILABLE DATA
1. Young people at risk of poverty	Partially***
2. Young people part of social welfare system	Partially***
3. Young people in prisons	Partially***
4. Dropout from secondary education	Partially***
5. Young people enrolled in tertiary education	Partially***
6. Young people graduated from tertiary education	Partially***
*** <i>Young people at risk of poverty</i> – Data not available for Albania, Montenegro and Turkey. Albania, North Macedonia and Turkey have never conducted the SILC survey. Montenegro conducted this kind of survey, and the results for 2015, 2016 and 2017 are published at the end of 2018. North Macedonia has the data for poor people which could be taken into consideration, but different methodology of calculation is used. <i>Young people part of social welfare system</i> – Data not available for any of the participating countries except Serbia. The main issue is that they mostly do not record this data for respective group of young people. <i>Young people in prisons</i> - Data not available for Turkey for 2017 and 2018. <i>Educational indicators</i> – Data not available for Turkey since their educational system is different than the other participating countries' systems so data are not comparable.	

<sup>1</sup> Indicator "On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of municipalities" implies that the institutions have an official website, Facebook and Twitter accounts

<sup>2</sup> Indicator "On-line tools for information and participation in decision-making of municipalities" implies that the institutions have an official website, Facebook and Twitter accounts

The table above clearly shows that the majority of obstacles has been encountered in the social participation dimension. Unfortunately, it is not possible to select 6 indicators in the field of social inclusion that all the target countries collect using the same methodology. Since 2016 and the development of the YPI, researchers have tried to be flexible and have changed 15 possible indicators within social dimension. As a result of that process, the 6 presented indicators were kept since the researchers estimated that these indicators represent the fundamental and basic data that need to be collected. Poverty rate should be available, since the SILC survey has been conducted in each of those countries, but open data is an issue in certain countries where statistical offices are not always responsive to requests. The majority of countries do not collect youth sensitive data in social welfare system and it is important to have this indicator in the Index. At the beginning of developing the Index, most countries did not have the data for young people in prisons. Three years later, only Turkey still has difficulties to collect this kind of data. The Ministries of Justice in each of the countries now collect the data by age groups. As for the indicators regarding education, the biggest challenge is the variety of methodologies and the target groups based on which data are collected.

The data for *political participation dimension* have been collected manually in all the countries since available statistics do not exist. Manual data collection represents the main issue for countries such as Turkey, which has 2951 municipalities and manual counting of the number of mayors is not possible. Economic participation data have been collected from official statistics; NEET rate, unemployment/employment rate from Labor force survey, which should be conducted for each country by national statistical offices using official methodologies in line with the EUROSTAT.

## Comparison of data

Tracking of data is only useful if there is a desired outcome or a comparable result. The table below shows the level of youth participation across the available indicators with the aim to compare the results for each country. The policy researchers engaged in this project have proposed the targeted percentages which stand for the desired outcome for the region. For the purpose of the targeted values, the percentage reached in the developed countries is used as an example for each indicator or a desirable state in researchers' opinion. In addition, when it comes to the economic participation dimension, targeted values from the EU2020 Strategy are used. The EU2030 Strategy was adopted by the EU as well as the new EU Youth Strategy 2019 – 2027. Consequently, those two reliable documents will be used for targeted values and as a new benchmark in the future.

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

Based on the available data presented above, the Youth Participation Index<sup>3</sup> related to Political and Economic Participation has been established. The Youth Participation Index provides the possibility to summarize complex, multidimensional data into one comprehensive number per country. Considering that all the data should have their purpose, the table below presents the targeted percentage of each observed indicator. As it is shown in the table above, the targeted value for political participation is **43.23**, while the targeted value for economic participation is **48.4**.

Summarizing those two dimensions, the targeted Youth Participation Index is **91.63**.

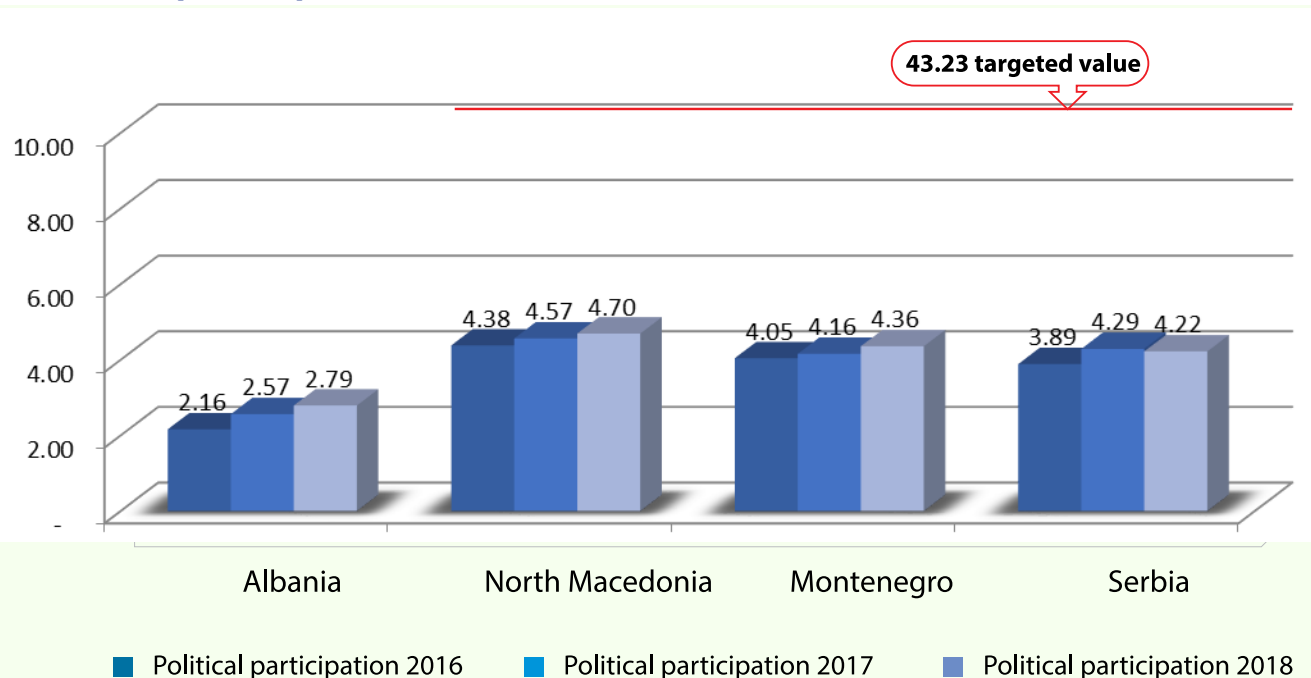
<sup>3</sup> The Youth Participation Index is incomplete due to the missing Social participation index



## Youth participation index per dimensions

During the process of data collection, the Western Balkan countries were realized to have more or less the same official methodologies and statistics, unlike Turkey which uses different ones.

### Political participation index



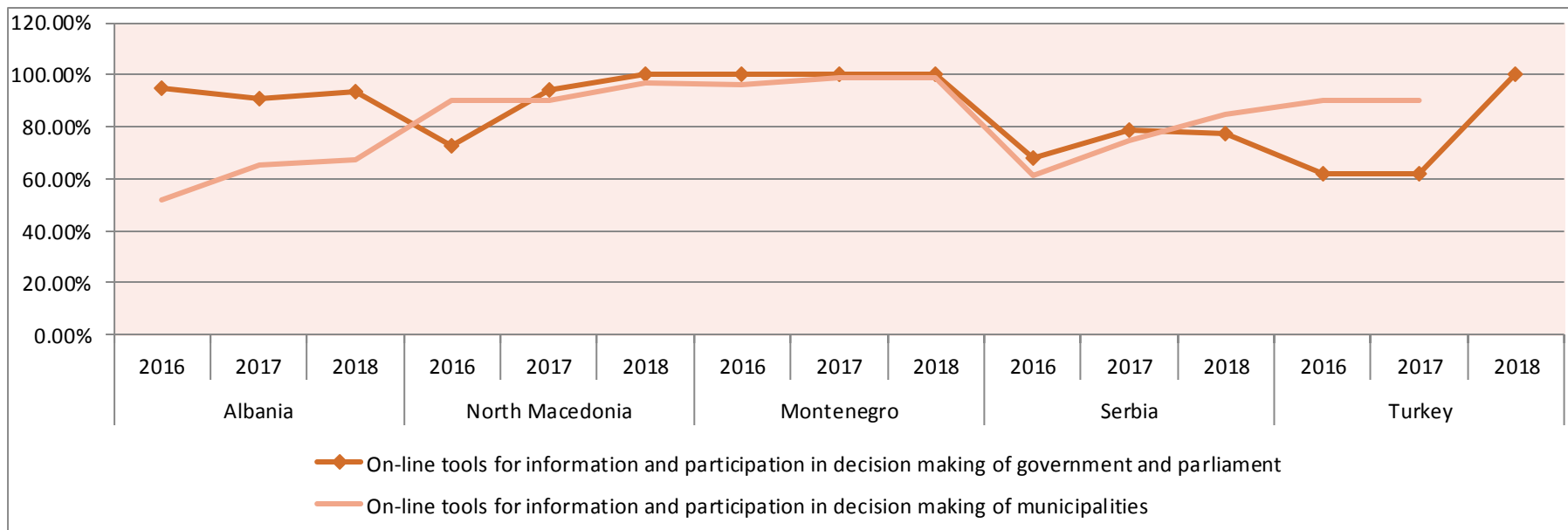
Graph no 1

The data presented in the above graph are related to the political participation dimension and are collected both using official data and reviewed available information from on-line presentations of the respective institutions for the period 2016-2017-2018. Since there is no data for Turkey regarding three indicators in this calculation, it is not compared with the other countries in the graph number 1.

Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro have recorded a slight upward trend in political participation, unlike Serbia where slight decrease can be observed from 2017 to 2018. By further analysis, it was found that the number of local youth offices decreased from 85.9% in 2017 to 69.7% in 2018<sup>4</sup>. The number of young mayors in Serbia has also decreased from 2.4% in 2017 to 0.6% in 2018. Albania records more local youth structures in 2018 (34.6% in 2017 and 49% in 2018).

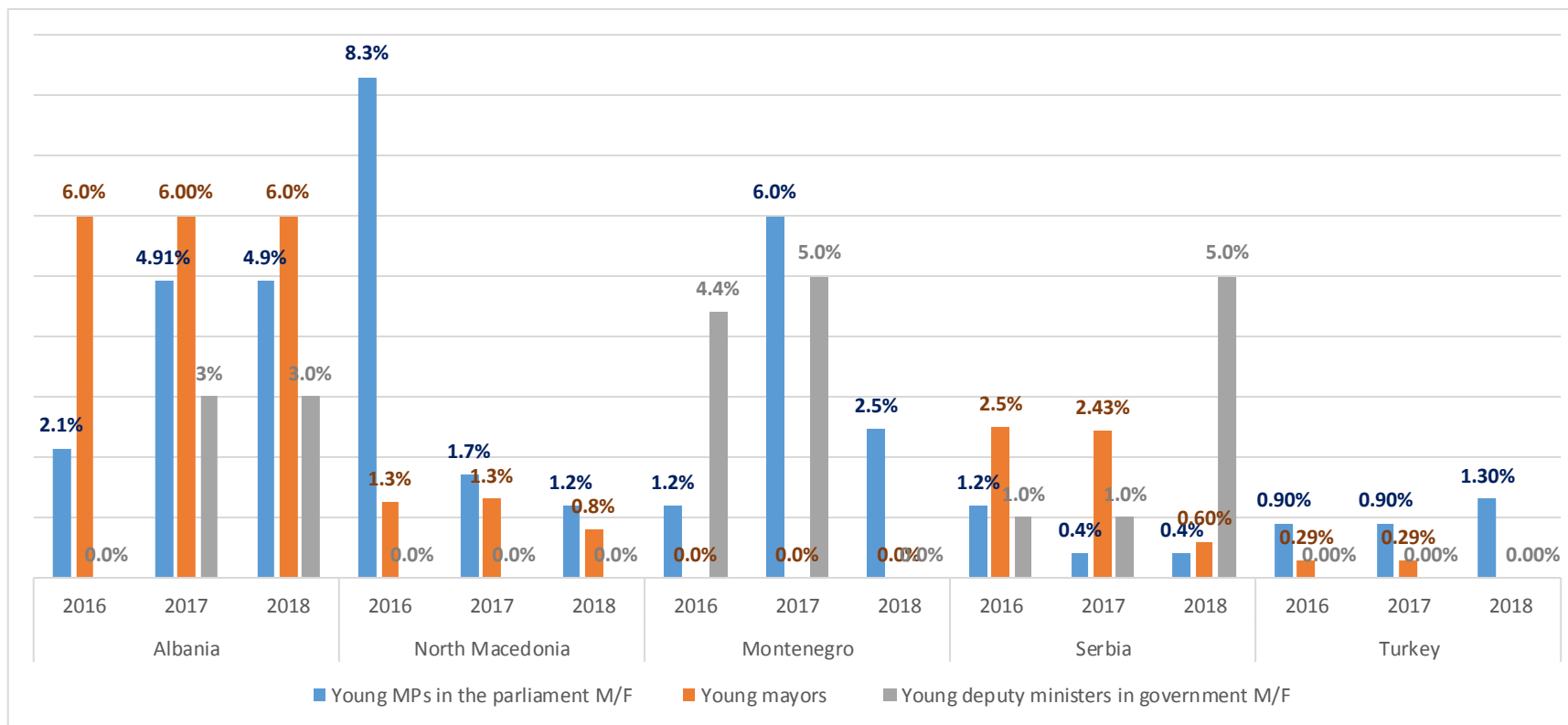
North Macedonia shows more online tools both on national and local levels in 2018. The analysis also shows that only Serbia (5%) and Albania (3%) have young deputy ministers, compared to Montenegro, North Macedonia and Turkey where there are no young deputy ministers. Montenegro records fewer deputy ministers and MPs in the parliament, but more local level youth structures. In Montenegro, the percentage of young people in decision-makers' positions such as Young deputy ministers dropped from 5% to 0%, but the percentage of Young MPs in Parliament has increased (6% to 8.6%). Therewith, the percentage of municipalities with the youth structures for involving young people in the decision-making processes increased (from 23% to 41%).

<sup>4</sup> Based on information available on municipal websites



Graph no 2

The graph number 2 shows the comparison of data related to on-line tools for information and includes Turkey. The data significantly influence the overall political participation score, especially in North Macedonia and Montenegro where on-line tools for information and participation in decision-making processes at national and local levels is the most developed. The results of the survey for 2018 show that all the countries have more than 67% of online tools for information which means that national bodies in those countries have websites, twitter and Facebook accounts. On local level, the trend is mostly the same, and during the The graph number 2 shows the comparison of data related to on-line tools for information and includes Turkey. The data significantly influence the overall political participation score, especially in North Macedonia and Montenegro where on-line tools for information and participation in decision-making processes at national and local levels is the most developed. The results of the survey for 2018 show that all the countries have more than 67% of online tools for information which means that national bodies in those countries have websites, twitter and Facebook accounts. On local level, the trend is mostly the same, and during the years municipalities have significantly increased their online presence, which could be seen in the graph below.



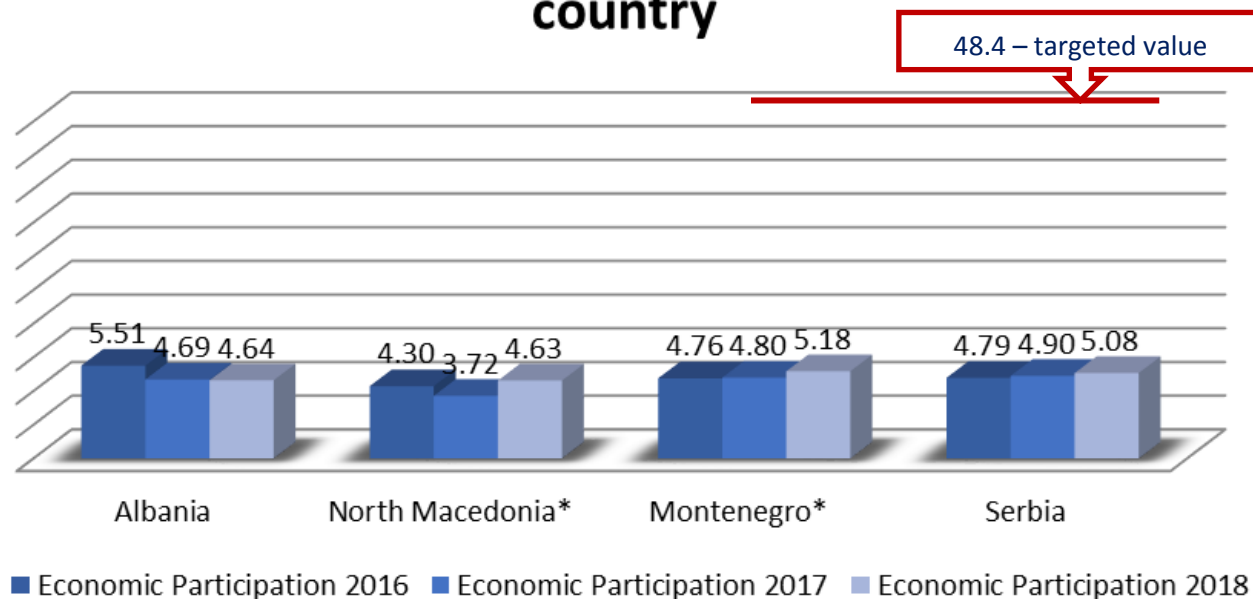
Graph no 3

The third graph shows the percentage of young Members of Parliament and young mayors who should have a direct influence in decision-making process. As it can be seen above, the number of young Members of Parliament increased to 8.3% in North Macedonia in 2016, but in 2018 this number decreased to 1.2%, which could be related to recent political changes in this country. Montenegro had 6% in 2017, but this number fell to 2.5% in 2018. For the rest of the countries the data mostly vary and do not exceed 2% as regards young MPs. There is a generally low percentage of young mayors, since in almost all countries it is around 1%, except in Albania which had 6% of young mayors for three years in a row.

However, the results show that youth participation in politics is at a low level in all participating countries. There is a need to increase participation of young people in executive level positions with the aim of participating in decision-making processes. Research has shown that there are almost no young government ministers in the countries of the Western Balkans as well as Turkey. Also, there is a small number of young deputy ministers in the governments of the participating countries.

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

## Economic Participation - comparison per country

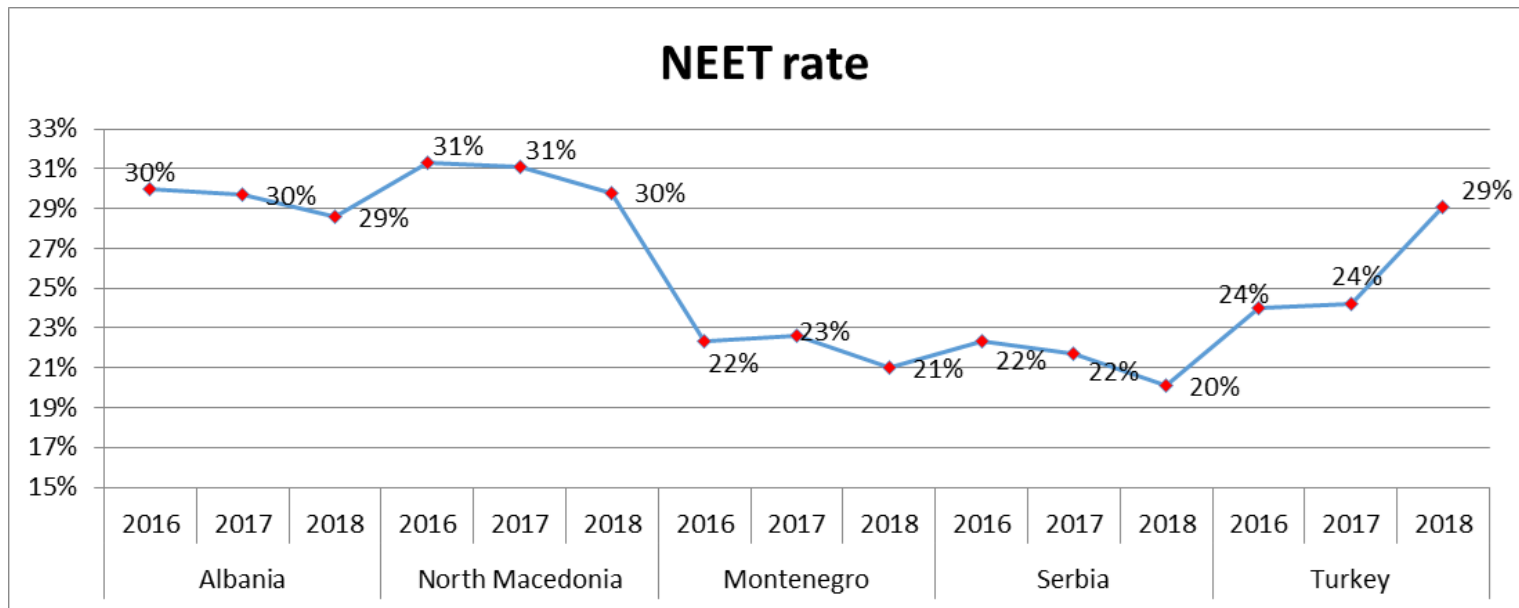


Graph no 4

\*The data presented in the graph are shown without the data for one indicator for North Macedonia and one for Montenegro as regards the comparison. Only the data from Albania and Serbia can be compared.

The data presented in the above graph are related to the economic participation dimension. The data are collected using official data from the respective institutions for the period 2016-2017-2018. There are no available data for Turkey because it has no available statistics for several indicators. Likewise, there are no data for Montenegro regarding Young people who started their own business with the financial support of the state, while there are no data regarding self-employed young people for North Macedonia. Only Albania and Serbia have all the available data. Since Montenegro and North Macedonia missed only one data per indicator, they are included in the graph above, unlike Turkey which misses more than one indicator and is excluded from the graph.

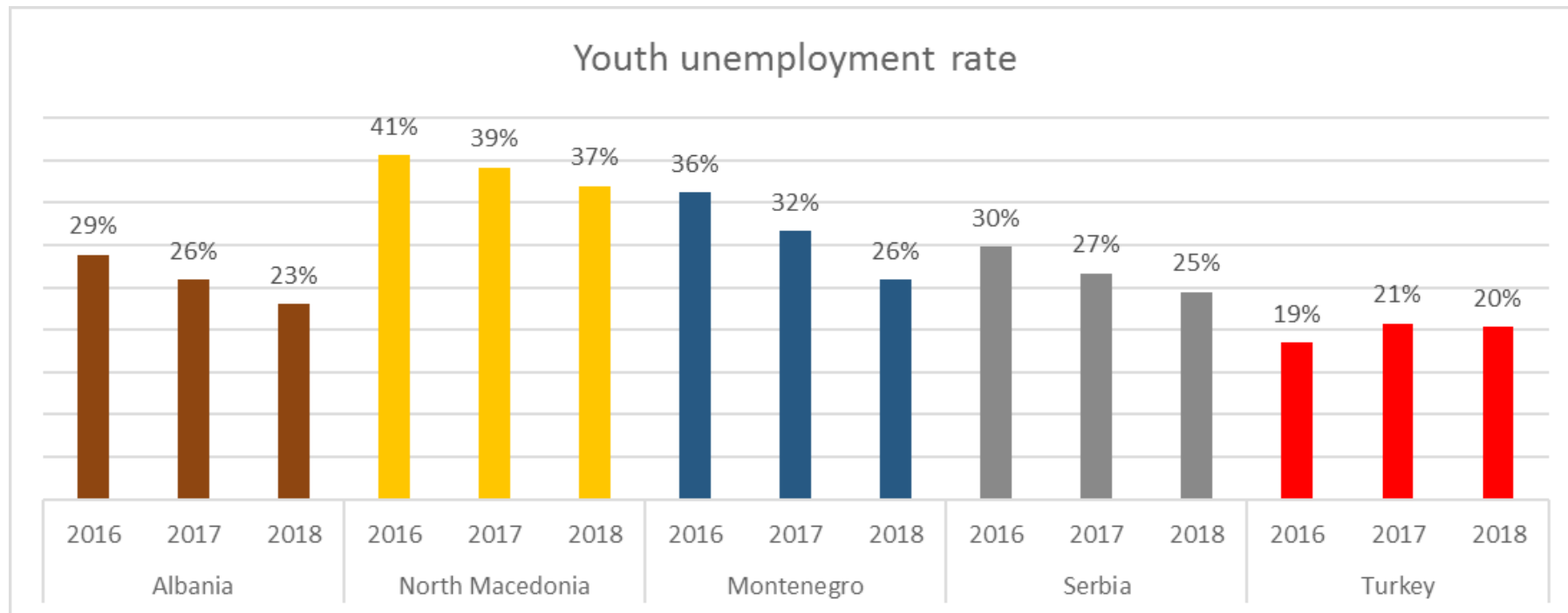
The economic participation of youth in Albania in the observed period is decreasing which is mostly influenced by the lack of financial support for young people who want to start their own business. More precisely, there is no available data for any approved financial support for young people who want to start their own business in Albania for 2017 and 2018. North Macedonia had the same problem as Albania, since during 2017 the financial support for young people who wanted to start their own business was missing because of the political changes which happened during 2016 and amounted to 0%, while for 2018 young people got the support to start their own business and 14% of young people got the support, which resulted in the increase. Montenegro and Serbia demonstrated a slight increase during the years.



Graph no 5

North Macedonia and Turkey have the highest NEET<sup>5</sup> rates of youth in 2018 with almost 30% (North Macedonia – 29,8%, Turkey – 29.1%). In all the countries except Turkey, NEET rate slightly decreased in 2018 when compared to 2016, but it is still higher than in Europe where NEET rate is 17,2%. Only Turkey noted the increase of NEET rate from 24% in 2016 to 29.1% in 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labor status (NEET rates), EUROSTAT



Graph no 6

There is a downward trend in the unemployment rate of young people in North Macedonia in the observed period. Still, it is the highest in the region (40.6 % in 2016 and 39.2 % in 2017, and 37% in 2018), while the lowest is in Turkey (18.5 % in 2016, 20.8 % in 2017 and 20.3% in 2018). The long-term unemployment rate has dropped slightly in the observed period in Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia but is still very high.

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

## Political participation index

Social Participation dimension still presents the main obstacle in the calculation of the YPI, since the majority of countries do not have available statistics for the same indicators regarding youth sensitive data collected by the same methodology. The comparative data obtained from the respective institutions are not available or do not match indicators' target group, and in that way do not reflect the overall situation in many cases.

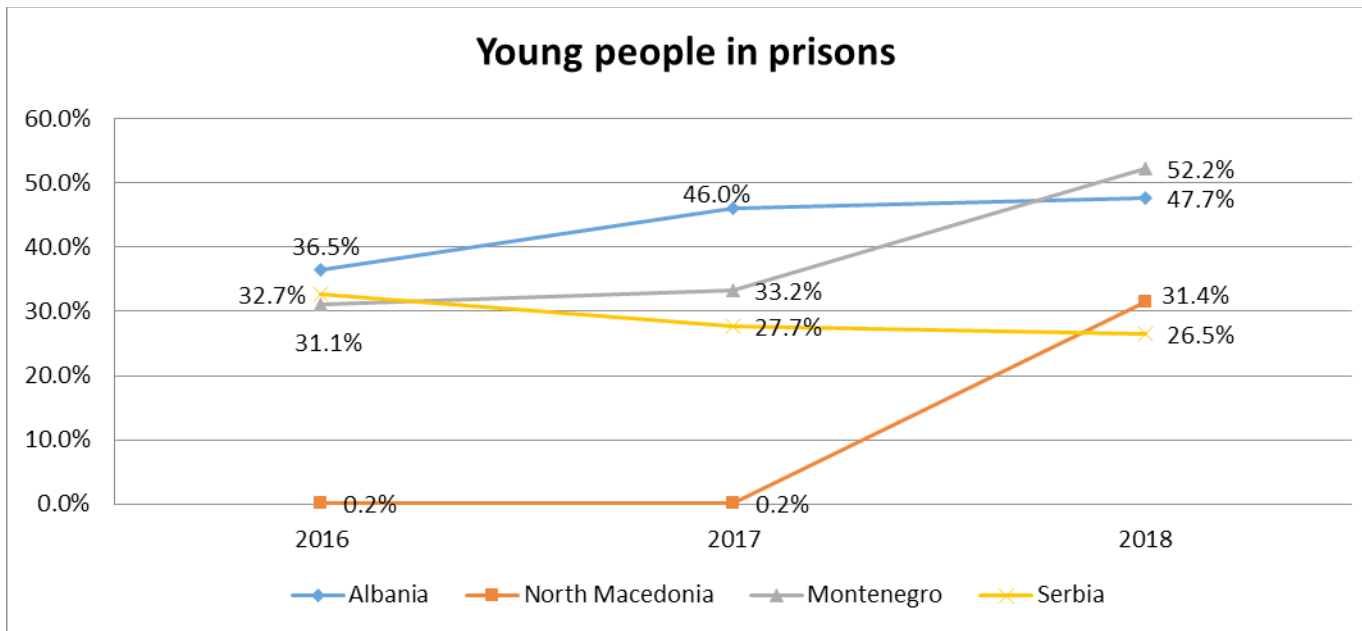
Social Participation dimension for 2018		Young people at risk of poverty	Young people in prisons (out of all prisoners)	Young people part of social welfare system	Dropout from secondary education	Young people enrolled in tertiary education	Young people graduated from tertiary education
Albania	DATA		47.7%		3.2*%	53.9%**	26%
	YEAR		2018		2017-2018	2017-2018	2017-2018
North Macedonia	DATA		31.4%		1.4%	14.5%	16.5%
	YEAR		2018		2017-2018	2017-2018	2017-2018
Montenegro	DATA		52.2%		4.6%	33%	14.59%
	YEAR		2018		2017-2018	2017-2018	2017-2018
Serbia	DATA	26.6%	26.5%	18.1%	1.4%	54.7%	18.10%
	YEAR	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018	2018
Turkey	DATA	22.2%				45.6%	9.57%
	YEAR	2018				2018	2018

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

\*\*National Institute of Statistics in Albania calculate the gross enrollment ratio in tertiary education, expressed as percentage of all enrolled persons, regardless of their age, against the 18-22 year old population.

Regarding young people's education, it should be noted that Montenegro has the highest percentage of young people who dropped out of secondary education (5.4% in 2017 and 4.6% in 2018). According to the available data, the lowest dropout rate of young people from secondary education is in Serbia – 1.1% in 2016, 1.3 % in 2017 and 1.4% in 2018 and North Macedonia 1.4% for 2018.

In Albania, the majority of young people are involved in tertiary education (85%). In Serbia, on the other hand, this number is stable during the years around 50%. It should be noted that the highest rate of young people graduating from tertiary education is in Albania – 25.19% while this rate is the lowest in Montenegro – 14.6% and North Macedonia – 16.5%. Since Turkey and Albania have different system of collecting data within the education system, it was difficult to compare it.



Graph no 7

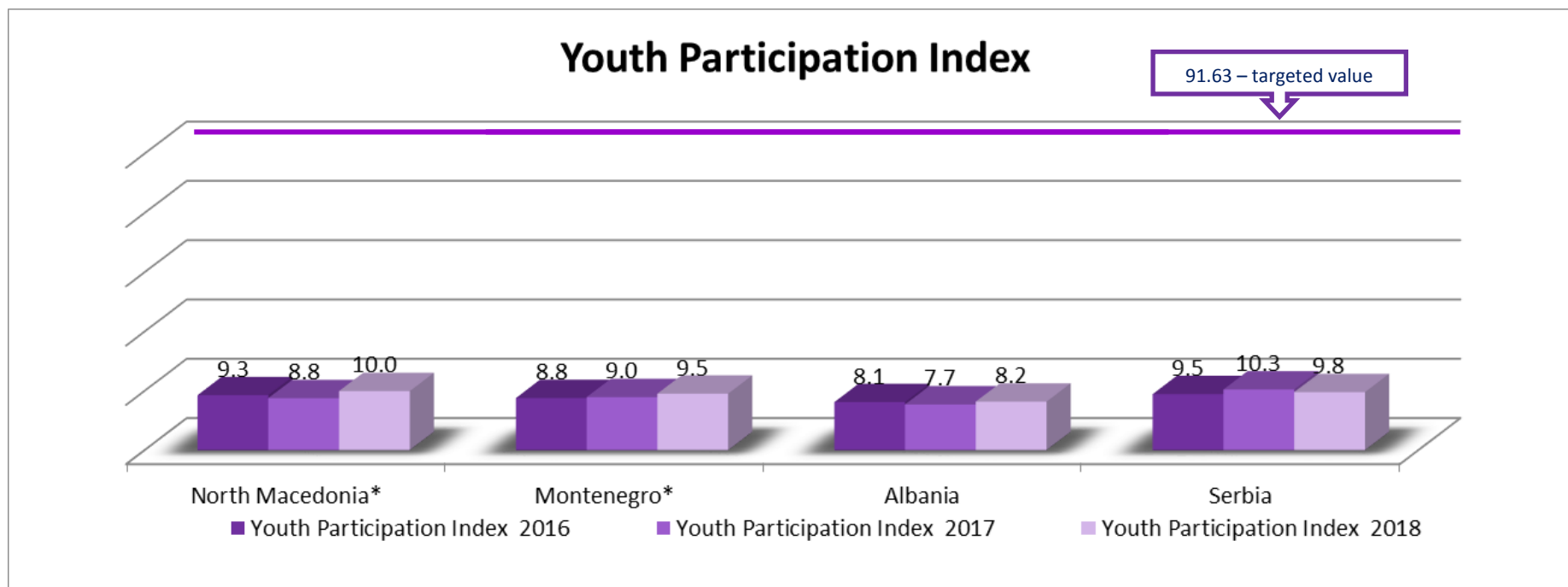
According to the available data, there is a significant increase in the number of young people in prison in Montenegro (33.2% in 2017 and 52% in 2018). Albania also has a high youth rate in prisons (46% in 2017 and 47.7% in 2018). A great number of young people in prison indicates serious problem in society. The lowest rate of young people in prison is in Serbia, 26.5% in 2018.

The table with all the data regarding social participation is in the Annex of the document.



Since two countries have unavailable data for several indicators, it is only possible to perform the calculation for 4 countries (Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia) which have available data for almost all indicators for political and economic participation.

The data as regards political participation indicators are available for 4 countries. When it comes to economic participation, two countries have all the necessary data. For social participation, as it is previously mentioned, the data are mostly unavailable. Taking into account the available data, incomplete youth participation index shows the big discrepancy between the current states in those four countries when compared to the targeted values. Despite the missing data regarding self-employed young people, North Macedonia still has the highest score for 2018 which is mostly due to the increase of political participation such as online tools and the existence of youth structure. Montenegro and Albania have slightly better score in 2018. Albania has a better score in political participation whereas Montenegro's score is better in economic participation. Serbian Index has slightly decreased in 2018, mostly because of the decrease in the political participation, the number of mayors and youth structures at local level.



Graph no 8

\*North Macedonia misses the data regarding Self-employed young people for 2018 and Montenegro misses the data regarding Young people who started their own business with the financial support of the state for 2016, 2017 and 2018.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The EU Youth Strategy 2019 - 2027 has addressed the same problems – high poverty risk, high NEET rate, high unemployment rate. It has emphasized that “socio-economic and democratic exclusion go hand in hand”. Still, this generation of young people is the best educated ever, as it is pointed out in the Strategy. Also, young people show interest in politics and are socially active: 53% engage in organized activities, nearly one third are active volunteers and others support a cause through media attention or consumer choice<sup>6</sup> which creates unique participation paradox. With the aim to use advantages and to achieve the set goals, the Strategy promotes that decision-makers need to make participation accessible for all young people: to be transparent about actions in their favor, to reach out and communicate in an accessible way through their preferred channels (like social media) and to promote their involvement in decisions.<sup>7</sup>

Keeping in mind the aims of the new EU Youth Strategy, the Western Balkan and Turkey face the same challenges. In line with the Strategy, Youth Participation Index deals with all the reliable data which led us to the same conclusion. Youth in the Western Balkan and Turkey barely have a chance to participate in creating their own future and to influence in decision-making processes. In order to shed light on the youth reality and to contribute to raising awareness of this issue, the YBH4WBT Network developed the YPI.

The Youth Participation Index is aimed at generating reliable data, i.e. data that accurately reflect the actual status of the variables which influence the participation of youth. YBH4WBT Network developed YPI with the idea to:

1. Understand and start using data as a reliable base of any decision
2. Monitor developing process in respective countries

Since 2016, YBH4WBT Network has monitored the position of young people in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey and has been publishing the Youth Participation Index (YPI). Based on the results of the YPI, we can see that youth in our region can be identified as a vulnerable group and that they face major challenges, such as high unemployment rates, high NEET rates, low youth participation rates, but also certain specific problems such as brain drain<sup>8</sup>, political instability and the lack of data. Therefore, cooperation between all the stakeholders is vital in order to establish different measures targeting the actual needs of young people, but also in order to exchange examples of good practice which have been already created and implemented in our countries.

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*“Europe cannot afford wasted talent, social exclusion or disengagement among its youth. Young people should not only be architects of their own life, but also contribute to positive change in society. The new European Solidarity Corps is a testimony to the eagerness of many young Europeans to show solidarity towards people and places in need, a core value underlying European cooperation.” – EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027*

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

<sup>6</sup> EU Youth Strategy : <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269> , 27.10.2019.

<sup>7</sup> EU Youth Strategy : <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269> , 27.10.2019.

<sup>8</sup> Cost of Youth Emigration, the Institute for Development and Innovation, [https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/WFD-Web-Brochure-NM\\_FINAL.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2ZSOsj7vgl\\_WX7cpugQBUL3TRo1f3KJgJeV-ql28XT-HeQfmezAi6\\_N4pM](https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/WFD-Web-Brochure-NM_FINAL.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2ZSOsj7vgl_WX7cpugQBUL3TRo1f3KJgJeV-ql28XT-HeQfmezAi6_N4pM), 2019.

conomic and social. The YPI enables us to see that all Western Balkan countries are slightly raising the level of political participation, over the years, mostly in the field of online tools for information as a first step in bringing young people closer to decision-making processes. Economic participation also shows a positive trend in most countries, which is mostly the result of employment indicators – lower unemployment rate, higher employment rate, which are getting better during the years.

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

## I Lack of data

The YPI represents a unique combination of indicators<sup>9</sup> with the same type of data from the respective countries. It allows data to be compared among countries. The first challenge of the process of Youth Participation Index structuring was to find the comparable indicators in each country. The second challenge during this process was how to find the right data in order to fit the requested form, which means to refer to the respective age group and to use the same methodology in the calculation. During the process of collecting data, the countries from the Western Balkans are observed to have more or less the same official methodologies, unlike Turkey which is using a different one, which resulted in a significant amount of unavailable data from Turkey. The rest of the unavailable data is mostly from North Macedonia, considering that their last Census was conducted in 2002. Over the years Turkey had less data such as missing three indicators in political participation dimension and two indicators in economic dimension.

The YPI shows that the biggest problem regarding data collection is related to the social dimension, where researchers could not identify 8

key indicators which would be comparable in all countries. Accordingly, the report indicates that there are no public data regarding vulnerable groups of young people in each country such as: youth at risk of poverty and young people in the social welfare system. The data regarding education have limitation, especially in regard to the missing student registry, for example in Serbia, which would be the next step to reliable statistics in this field. Initially, collecting data related to the number of young people in prisons was very challenging, but over these three years the system of recording and providing of data has improved. For example, Ministry of Justice in Republic of Serbia at first provided the number of young prisoners without the total number of prisoners, in the second year, it provided the percentage of young people in prisons. To sum up, the missing data in social participation dimension is the main problem of Youth Participation index. Considering that most countries conducted the SILC survey and should have available poverty rate and that most of them provided data regarding education, it can be concluded that the main issue is how to collect the data regarding youth in social protection system since all participating countries except Serbia do not have data regarding young people as a part of their social welfare system.

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

<sup>9</sup>The indicators for three dimension of Youth Participation Index are presented on the 4th page of this document

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

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

#### **Recommendations:**

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

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

<sup>10</sup> Chapters of the acquis: [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/chapters-of-the-acquis\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/chapters-of-the-acquis_en)

<sup>11</sup> Eurostat is the statistical office of the European Union situated in Luxembourg. Its mission is to provide high quality statistics for Europe. Collecting data for EMU and developing statistical systems in candidate countries for EU membership are more important part of the work. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

<sup>12</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth>

#### **Political dimension**

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

#### **Economic dimension**

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

#### **Social dimension**

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

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

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

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

comprehensive legislative and institutional reforms to successfully close this chapter, according to the Progress Report.

All three countries that opened Chapter 18 are moderately prepared and made some progress on harmonizing the statistical methodology with the EU standards, but still need to work on further improvement. Montenegro and Serbia need to work on strengthening human resources of Statistical Offices, to attract and retain qualified staff to meet the obligations of the acquis. Serbia should in particular adopt the new statistical law to increase the independence of the Statistical Office, even the legal framework for statistical infrastructure is largely in line with the European Statistics Code of Practice. All those three countries need to align their statistics with European System of National and Regional Accounts (ESA 2010).

### **3. Advocate to monitor the data of young people in social welfare system**

Social welfare system is the real indicator of condition in a society. Keeping this in mind, it is important to track all available statistics and identify problems in an early stage. YBH insists for each country to take all available resources and begin to monitor youth participation rate in social welfare system such as how many young people receive financial support from Social Welfare System, which present unique instrument for measuring the real status of young people. Developing and improving the data collected on young people in the social welfare system is a key precondition for creating quality support measures for the most vulnerable youth.

## **II Low level of youth participation**

Youth participation matters and the issue of youth disengagement continue to be a major problem faced not only by the Western Balkan region and Turkey, but also by contemporary democracies in the EU.<sup>3</sup> Based on

the results of the YPI, the participation of young people in the decision-making process is extremely low in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey. This is particularly noticeable if we analyze the political participation dimension of the YPI, whose index in our region ranges from 2.79 in Albania to 4.70 in North Macedonia, which is extremely low having in mind that the target value is 43.23.

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

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

### **Recommendations:**

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

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

<sup>13</sup> Youth political participation in the EU: evidence from a cross-national analysis, Magdalena Kitanova, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13676261.2019.1636951>, 2019.

to provide transparent information via online tools. However, the significant improvement has been made in this respect during 2018 since most countries have online tools on national level – almost 75% and higher which means that almost every national body has at least one online tool (websites, FB or twitter) and on local level – 68% and higher.

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

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

Young people who can access information have the power to participate in decision-making process and are influential in advocating for the issues which are important to them. When youth participation at the national level is concerned, we have pointed out that in Albania and Turkey there are no developed mechanisms for involving young people in the decision-making process. At the same time, in all the countries, mechanisms for youth participation at the local level have not been fully developed. Monitoring over those data shows that Albania and Montenegro have increased the percentage of youth structures at local levels (Albania from 18% in 2016 to 49% in 2018, Montenegro from 22% in 2016 to 41% in 2018) over the years, unlike North Macedonia, which is stable – around 77/78% of youth structures at local levels. In the case of Serbia, the situation varies from 78% of youth structures at local level in 2016, 86% in 2017 to 70% in 2018. Although there are data that prove the existence of youth networks in a few countries, especially at the national level, the number of young people who participate as decision-makers is still very low.

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

## **3. Developing new support measures for specific vulnerable groups.**

The alarming number of young people in prisons, as well as high NEET rate among young people led to the conclusion that it is necessary to improve the situation of the most deprived young people as soon as possible. The countries of the Western Balkan and Turkey should develop appropriate support measures in cooperation with CSOs to target vulnerable young people, such as NEET youth.

Since CSOs have a constant contact with young people and mechanisms to recognize their needs, the partnership between CSO and state is very important. Only joint effort on new support measures can ensure the appropriate response to the need of young people.

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

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

One of the most effective models of youth participation at the local level is YouthBank model, as a unique program that empowers young people to identify the key issues that affect their lives and that inspires them to initiate changes. Youth banks are local organizations of young people who design and run their own projects but also support other youth lo-

cal initiatives in fundraising, project managing and promotion of their projects. The particular value of the model is that it brings together local municipalities, business sector and young people. Young people should be recognized as partners of local self-governments. A comprehensive and systematic approach is needed, allowing all relevant actors to be involved in creating conditions for youth development and the establishment of local youth policies, their implementation and monitoring over them.

The YouthBank model is currently being used in 26 countries. The network provides support for the model to be implemented in Montenegro and Albania. YouthBank International (YBI) has achieved notable success in the past 4 years, scaling the YouthBank proposition to over 200 sites, supported by 26 networks on 4 continents and funding over 4500 small scale projects.<sup>14</sup>

YouthBanks are funds run by young people to support youth-led grass root projects that address community issues that matter to them:

◇ Involve young people in projects that they design and run for themselves. We believe it is the most potent way of engaging young people in their community.

◇ Involve young people in grant-making because we know from experience that this makes them more aware of the needs and aspirations of their local community and HOW to make a difference.

◇ Encourage involvement in voluntary action where the issues are more closely matched to young people's own concerns. Creating dynamics where trustful, inclusive, empowering, respectful relationships can thrive and where positive change is created, encouraging the involvement of young people who are currently disengaged or disempowered by their respective systems can be inspiring so they give back to others and their communities.

◇ Devolve responsibility and accountability by placing decision-making about small scale resource allocation into the hands of young people who act philanthropically, bridge divisions, take leadership roles, stimulate entrepreneurial spirit and opportunities. The YouthBank model provides clear evidence of the positive impact that young people can have on communities. This allows each YouthBank to be more effective in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and bring young people's perspectives to the national and international public policy debate.

<sup>13</sup> YouthBank International, <https://www.youthbankinternational.org/>

## Political participation

Political participation Dimension - 2016	Albania	North Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia	Turkey
Young ministers in Government M/F	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%
Young deputy ministers in government M/F	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%	1.0%	0.00%
Young MPs in the parliament M/F	2.1%	8.3%	1.2%	1.2%	0.90%
Young mayors	6.0%	1.3%	0.0%	2.5%	0.29%
On-line tools for information and participation in decision making of government and parliament	95.00%	72.5%	100.0%	68.0%	61.80%
On-line tools for information and participation in decision making of municipalities	52.0%	90.0%	96.0%	61.0%	90.00%
Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on national level	0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.00%
Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on local level	18.03%	78.5%	22.0%	77.5%	no

Political participation Dimension - 2017	Albania	North Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia	Turkey
Young ministers in Government M/F	0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%
Young deputy ministers in government M/F	3%	0.0%	5.0%	1.0%	0.00%
Young MPs in the parliament M/F	4.91%	1.7%	6.0%	0.4%	0.90%
Young mayors	6.00%	1.3%	0.0%	2.43%	0.29%
On-line tools for information and participation in decision making of government and parliament	91%	94.1%	100.0%	78.55%	61.80%
On-line tools for information and participation in decision making of municipalities	66%	90.0%	99.0%	75%	90.00%
Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on national level	0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.00%
Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on local level	34.6%	78.5%	23.0%	85.9%	no



<b>Political participation Dimension - 2018</b>	<b>Albania</b>	<b>North Macedonia</b>	<b>Montenegro</b>	<b>Serbia</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
Young ministers in Government M/F	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%
Young deputy ministers in government M/F	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.00%
Young MPs in the parliament M/F	4.9%	1.2%	8.6%	0.4%	1.30%
Young mayors	6.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.60%	no data
On-line tools for information and participation in decision making of government and parliament	93.3%	100.0%	100.0%	77.50%	100.00%
On-line tools for information and participation in decision making of municipalities	67.2%	96.8%	99.0%	84.75%	no data
Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on national level	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.00%
Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on local level	49.0%	77.0%	41.0%	69.7%	no data

## Economic participation

<b>Economic Participation dimension - 2016</b>	<b>Albania</b>	<b>North Macedonia</b>	<b>Montenegro</b>	<b>Serbia</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
NEET rate	30.0%	31.3%	22.3%	22.3%	24.00%
Youth unemployment rate	28.9%	40.6%	36.3%	29.8%	18.50%
Long-term youth unemployment rate	16.7%	29.7%	18.6%	16.7%	20.40%
Youth Labor force participation rate	45.7%	20.0%	32.7%	47.2%	56.10%
Youth Employment rate	32.4%	28.6%	21.0%	33.1%	34.20%
Young people that started their own business with the financial support of state	54.50%	47.7%	no	23.3%	22.62%
Self-employed young people	29.00%	6.0%	9.0%	0.6%	no

<b>Economic Participation dimension - 2017</b>	<b>Albania</b>	<b>North Macedonia</b>	<b>Montenegro</b>	<b>Serbia</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
NEET rate	29.70%	31.1%	22.6%	21.70%	24.20%
Youth unemployment rate	25.9%	39.2%	31.7%	26.70%	20.80%
Long-term youth unemployment rate	13.8%	28.9%	18.5%	13.10%	no
Youth Labor force participation rate	45.8%	22.2%	31.2%	47.6%	no
Youth Employment rate	33.8%	30.2%	21.3%	34.9%	34.10%
Young people that started their own business with the financial support of state	0.0%	0.0%	no	19.50%	no
Self-employed young people	18.3%	7.3%	8.4%	2.76%	no

<b>Economic Participation dimension -2018</b>	<b>Albania</b>	<b>North Macedonia</b>	<b>Montenegro</b>	<b>Serbia</b>	<b>Turkey</b>
NEET rate	28.6%	29.8%	21.0%	20.10%	29.10%
Youth unemployment rate	23.1%	37.0%	26.0%	24.50%	20.30%
Long-term youth unemployment rate	13.1%	26.3%	15.7%	11.70%	44.00%
Youth Labor force participation rate	50.1%	26.0%	31.9%	48.1%	44.00%
Youth Employment rate	38.5%	30.9%	35.9%	36.3%	35.00%
Young people that started their own business with the financial support of state	0.0%	13.7%	no	20.5%	no data
Self-employed young people	0.9%	no	5.8%	6.8%	no data

## Social participation

Social Participation dimension for 2016	Albania	North Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia	Turkey
Young people at risk of poverty	(Poor people) 15%	31.3% (Poor people) 24.8%	27.9%	30.30%	27.10%
Young people in prisons	36.54%	0.20%	31.1%	32.70%	63.00%
Young people part of social welfare system				18.97%	
Dropout from secondary education	3.70*%		5.50%	1.10%	
Young people enrolled in tertiary education	56.80%**		33.90%	50.70%	40.53%
Young people graduated from tertiary education	21.48%		12.86%	20.00%	

Social Participation dimension for 2017	Albania	North Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia	Turkey
Young people at risk of poverty		22.2 %	26.2%		
Young people in prisons (out of all prisoners)	46.00%		33.2%	27.7	
Young people part of social welfare system				18.16%	
Dropout from secondary education	3.35*%	2.30%	5.4%	1.30%	
Young people enrolled in tertiary education	53.9%**	28.90%	34.5%	54.20%	42.43%
Young people graduated from tertiary education	25.19%	11.50%	14.51%	19.70%	

Social Participation dimension for 2017	Albania	North Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia	Turkey
Young people at risk of poverty				26.6%	
Young people in prisons (out of all prisoners)	47.7%	31.4%	52.2%	26.5%	
Young people part of social welfare system				18.1%	
Dropout from secondary education	3.2*%	1.40%	4.6%	1.40%	
Young people enrolled in tertiary education	53.9%**	14.50%	33%	54.70%	45.60%
Young people graduated from tertiary education	26%	16.50%	14.59%	18.10%	9.57%

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

\*\*National Institute of Statistics in Albania calculate the gross enrollment ratio in tertiary education, expressed as percentage of all enrolled persons, regardless of their age, against the 18-22 year old population.



# YouthBankHub

WESTERN BALKAN AND TURKEY



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