

## Youth Partnership

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



EUROPEAN UNION



COUNCIL  
OF EUROPE    CONSEIL  
DE L'EUROPE

# COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH POLICY IN BULGARIA



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Context and principles of national youth policy	2
1.1 Context of national youth policy	2
1.2. Principles of national youth policy	2
2. Statistics on young people	3
3. Actors and Structures	4
3.1 Public authorities	4
3.1.1 National public authorities	6
3.1.2 Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field	6
3.1.3 Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field	6
3.2 Youth welfare services (comprising public and/or non public actors)	7
3.3 Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field	7
3.3.1 Youth Councils	7
3.3.2 Youth NGOs	7
4. Legislation	8
5. National Policy Programmes on youth	8
6. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth	9
7. European Dimension of youth policy	10
7.1 Council of Europe	10
7.2 European Union	10
7.2.1 Implementation of the Youth in Action programme	10
7.2.2 Follow up of the EU Youth Strategy (2010 – 2018) on the national level	11
8. Further sources of information on youth policy in Bulgaria	12

# **1. Context and principles of national youth policy**

## **1.1 Context of national youth policy**

Until July 2009 the state institutions, in response to the needs of the youth sector, have implemented numerous concrete programmes and activities to promote youth training, sports, art, entrepreneurship, youth employment and etc. The State Agency for Youth and Sport, in particular the Directorate General “Youth Policy” has coordinated the national youth policy until July 2009, as well as the development and the implementation of specific youth programmes. Since 2002, the Youth Directorate prepares an Annual Youth Report which is adopted by the National Assembly.

By decision of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers, the activities and records of the Directorate General “Youth policy” were transferred from the State Agency for Youth and Sport to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. By decision of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, new “Structural Regulations” are being adopted and the Directorate General “Youth Policy” was restructured in the “Youth Directorate”.

The Programme Declaration of the Government of the European Development of Bulgaria 2009 – 2013 puts a significant emphasis on youth policies and clearly defines its objective – “To develop sustainable mechanisms for investing in youth as an important social resource and to mobilize the potential of young people in the development of Bulgaria and the European Union”. To achieve its objective, the Programme Declaration provides a wide range of measures as well as the main instruments, namely the EU “Youth in Action Programme” 2007 - 2013 and the National youth programmes; the Youth information and consulting centers 2007 – 2010 and the Youth activity programme 2008-2010. Starting from October 2009, the administration of the National youth programmes has been transferred to the National center for European Youth Programmes and Initiatives – the National Agency for Youth in Action programme. The Directorate General Youth Policy in the State Agency for Youth and Sport has been transformed to Youth Directorate of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science with the responsibilities of monitoring and controlling of the youth programmes, as well as the planning and development of youth policy papers and new youth programmes and initiatives for the development of the youth sector.

Through encouraging the involvement of the young people in the development and implementation of the sectoral policies the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science has taken the responsibility to make the Republic of Bulgaria attractive to all young people and to establish a knowledge based economy giving opportunities for development to all young people through the creation of a long - term legal regulations.

## **1.2. Principles of national youth policy**

The Bulgarian National Youth Policy is a focused and coherent activity of the state, municipalities, youth organizations and the society. It aims to establish favorable conditions for the full personal development of young people and their participation in the social and economic life as well as the integration of the young in the decision making process at a local, regional and national level through activities promoting their development in the country.

**The main principles of the National Youth Policy are:**

1. legitimacy, transparency, responsiveness, equality, focused and coherent policies of the state, municipalities and society for the youth development;
2. the coordination of the youth policy with the educational, social, health, cultural and sport policy as well as their coordination with the justice system, internal affairs and the defense policy;
3. the coordination of the national youth policy with the youth policies conducted by and within the European Union, Council of Europe and the United Nations;
4. integration of the Child and Youth Policies;
5. ensuring the participation of young people in the policy decision making process;
6. the freedom of the association of young people, youth initiatives as well as self-government of the youth associations;
7. decentralization of the youth policies.

**2. Statistics on young people**

According to the National Statistics Institute, the number of young people living in the Republic of Bulgaria to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011:

**Young people in global population**

	In general					
Age	Total	In %	Men	In %	Women	In %
Total for the country	7327224	100 %	3566767	48.68 %	3760457	51.32 %
15-19	358043	4.9 %	184231	5.2 %	173812	4.6 %
20-24	476084	6.5 %	244907	6.9 %	231177	6.1 %
24-29	490354	6.7 %	254638	7.1 %	235716	6.3 %

### Young people in the towns:

	In towns					
Age	Total	In %	Men	In %	Women	In %
Total for the country	5324900	100 %	2572980	48.32 %	2751920	51.68 %
15-19	258896	4.9 %	132676	5.2 %	126220	4.6 %
20-24	369447	6.9%	187111	7.3 %	182336	6.6 %
24-29	381237	7.2%	195430	7.6 %	185807	6.8 %

### Young people in rural areas:

	In rural areas					
Age	Total	In %	Men	In %	Women	In %
Total for the country	2002324	100%	993787	50.76 %	1008537	49.24 %
15-19	99147	5.0%	51555	5.2 %	47592	4.7 %
20-24	106637	5.3%	57796	5.8 %	48841	4.8 %
24-29	109117	5.4%	59208	6 %	49909	4.9 %

## 3. Actors and Structures

### 3.1 Public authorities

#### 3.1.1 National public authorities:

- Ministry in charge of youth

**Ministry of Education, Youth and Science;**

**Web site:** [www.mon.bg](http://www.mon.bg)

- Minister

**Prof. Phd. Sergey Ignatov;**

- Youth Department in the Ministry

#### **Youth Directorate**

- Main tasks of the Youth department

1. to assist the Minister in the implementation of the National Youth Policy;
2. to monitor the implementation of the National youth programmes;
3. to monitor the implementation of the youth projects funded by the National Youth Programmes;
4. to support the Minister in the implementation and coordination the relation with other state institutions whose activities affect the youth policy as well as with the NGOs and other stakeholders involved in youth activities;
5. to support the interaction between the Ministry and the municipalities on youth issues;
6. collecting, processing, keeping and providing information related to youth activities and youth programmes;
7. to prepare terms of reference for sociological and statistical studies and analysis;
8. to coordinate the information exchange with the administrative structures and the NGOs;
9. to provide and update the data in the specialized information systems;
10. to prepare an Annual Youth Report by providing information for the implementation of youth policy at national and regional level;
11. to maintain contacts and to cooperate with state bodies and NGOs in other countries as well as international organizations and institutions whose activities are related to the implementation of the youth policy at national level;
12. to be responsible for the development, updating and the implementation of the Legal Acts related to its competence;
13. to participate in the synchronization process of the national legislation with the European Union Acts in its competence;

- Number of people who work in this ministry in the youth department – **13**.

- Director responsible for Youth in the Ministry

Yanichka Trueva – Director of Youth Directorate;

E-mail: [yanichka.trueva@mon.bg](mailto:yanichka.trueva@mon.bg)

Tel: +35924223948

- Contact person in the youth department competent for European youth policy

Petyo Kanev – Expert, Youth Directorate;

E-mail: [p.kanev@mon.bg](mailto:p.kanev@mon.bg)

Tel: +359884101427

- Other national public bodies who are directly involved in youth policies

Other Ministries - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Healthcare, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Economic, Energetic and Tourism, Ministry of Physical Education and Sport, State Agency for Child Protection.

- Parliament commission in charge of youth issues

- Name

Parliamentary Commission of Education, Science and Child issues, Youth and Sport.

- name of president / chair

Ognyan Stoichkov Yanakiev

E-mail: [stoichkov@parliament.bg](mailto:stoichkov@parliament.bg)

### **3.1.2 Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field**

To ensure the implementation of national youth policy in the territory of each regional province the regional governors:

1. work in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science and the young people on issues related to the National Youth Policy;
2. analyze the youth situation in the regional province and formulate priorities, specific goals and measures for the development of Regional Youth Policy.

### **3.1.3 Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field**

The Mayors of the municipalities are responsible for conducting the municipal Youth policy in accordance with the National Youth Strategy 2010-2020.

The Mayors of the municipalities:

1. work in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the regional

governors and the young people on issues related to the National Youth Policy;

2. analyze the youth situation in the municipalities and formulate priorities, specific goals and measures for the development of Municipality Youth Policy.

### **3.2 Youth welfare services**

The State promotes and facilitates the provisions of youth activities and youth services such as:

1. information and consulting services for supporting the personal, social and career development of the young people;
2. leisure time activities;
3. promoting non-formal education for broadening the knowledge, experience, and the skills of young people for their inclusion in the civil society, science, culture, art, entrepreneurship, healthy lifestyle and preventing of public nuisance;
4. supporting the volunteering activities of the young people.

### **3.3 Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field**

More than 200 Youth NGOs offered youth and social services within the country.

#### **3.3.1 Youth Councils**

Municipality Youth Councils and Children's Parliaments are established in 30 % of the municipalities in Bulgaria. They are subsidiary and advisory bodies to the local authorities in the field of youth policy. The Municipality Youth Councils and the Children's Parliaments are not independent entities.

#### **3.3.2 Youth NGOs**

37 Youth information and consulting centers were established through the National Youth Programme "Youth Information and consulting centers" 2007 – 2010. They provide youth services in 28 districts of the country. 3 centers are established in the biggest cities and in Sofia there are 5 centers.

Other active youth NGOs work within the country:

1. Association for Democratic Education "Phare", Bourgas;
2. Association "Idea", Varna
3. Association "Focus", Pazardzhik
4. Association "Astica", Bourgas

5. Association "Bagatour", Stara Zagora
6. Association "Open Youth", Sofia
7. Youth association for peace and development in the Balkans, Plovdiv
8. National community center "Brotherhood", Kyustendil
9. Association "Inspiration", Rousse
10. Association "Youth Tolerance", Gorna Oryahovica
11. YMCA, Gabrovo
12. National community center "Future Now", Smolyan
13. "Start" Foundation, Sofia
14. EVS Bulgaria, Sofia
15. Association "Youth impulse for the future", Montana
16. International Youth Volunteer Center, Haskovo
17. Association "Euro alternatives", Yakoruda
18. Association "Youth and Civil Initiatives in the Rose Valley", Karlovo
19. Association "Missionis", Targovishte
20. Association "Youth center", Pleven

## **4. Legislation**

### **4.1 National legislation on youth**

- Youth Law;
- Constitution of Republic of Bulgaria
- National Youth Strategy 2010-2020;
- Implementation Plan of the National Youth Strategy 2010 – 2020 for 2011;
- Draft Implementation Plan of the National Youth Strategy 2010 – 2020 for 2012;
- Child Protection Act;
- Higher Education Act;

#### **Youth law**

Following the Programme Declaration of the Government of the European Development of Bulgaria 2009 – 2013, a working group in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science was established and

drew a **Youth Law**. The Youth Law is aimed at lasting settlement of public relationships in the youth area. It outlines the main principles, planning and management of the national youth policy in Bulgaria. The drafting of the Law was preceded by a comprehensive in-depth study and analysis of European legislation in the youth area as well as of the national needs for sustainable mechanisms for specialized support of young people's development. The Youth Law was approved in January 2012 by the Bulgarian Council of Ministers. In April 2012, the Youth Law was approved by the National Assembly of Republic of Bulgaria.

**National Youth Strategy 2010-2020** is focused on the building and implementing of a unified, consistent and sustainable, youth policy in Bulgaria based on the sectoral approach, intersectoral cooperation and co-management with the young people at a local, regional and national level. The National Youth Strategy 2010-2020 is aimed to the young people from the aged of 15 to 29 and it is prepared in accordance with the international and European standards for youth work.

The National Youth Strategy 2010-2020 was prepared after an extensive study and analysis of the needs and interests of the young people in the country. The National Youth Strategy is composed from 9 main strategic objectives.

**Implementation Plan of the National Youth Strategy 2010 – 2020 for 2011** - In 2011, the first Action plan 2011 for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy (2010-2020) was developed and subsequently adopted by the Council of Ministers Decision from 29<sup>th</sup> June. The Action plan for 2011 outlines the main responsibilities of all involved institutions as well as the investments at local, regional and national level aimed at young people (both those which are already being implemented and those that are to be realized by the end of 2011). The Plan includes tasks and activities in nine priority areas. The Common financial framework of the plan is estimated at 259 105 057 lv. The three top priority areas for financing for 2011 are be "Promotion of the economic activity and career development of young people" (207 961 391 lv.), „Improving the access to information and quality services" (24 523 694 lv.) and „Development of the intercultural and international dialogue" (20 068 780 lv.).

**Draft Implementation Plan of the National Youth Strategy 2010 – 2020 for 2012** - The Implementation Plan envisages to summarize and coordinate the activities, programmes and tasks so that to establish a supportive environment for quality professional development, thus facilitating the access to quality services for special support for the full personal and social development in accordance with the needs and interests of the young people in Bulgaria. The Implementation Plan also envisages the establishment of a supportive and encouraging environment for a meaningful participation in the intercultural and the international youth interaction as well as the development of the youth volunteering and the prevention of social exclusion. The Action Plan envisages the implementation of the strategic and the operational objectives set by the National Youth Strategy 2010-2020 as well as it aims to improve the living standards of young people.

## **4.2 Regional and local legislation**

### **4.2.1 Regional legislation on youth**

The policies for regional development include priorities and measures aimed towards realizing the local youth policies.

### **4.2.2. Local legislation on youth**

Some municipalities have developed Municipality Youth Strategies beside the main State Acts related to the young people.

## **5. National Policy Programmes on youth**

**National Youth Programme (2011-2015)** - In 2011, the National Youth Programme (2011-2015) was developed and subsequently approved on 27<sup>th</sup> July. The programme is the instrument for the realization of the priorities of national youth policy in the country set up in the National Youth Strategy (2010-2020). The National Youth Programme provides financial support for youth initiatives, as well as for informational, counseling and educational services for young people. The Programme is based on young people's reported needs and on the conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation of the previous national youth programmes – "Programme for youth activities" (2008-2010) and programme "Youth information and counseling centers 2007-2010" – conducted in the beginning of 2011. Fundamental European and international documents in the youth policy area have also been taken into consideration. The programme's direct target groups are young people aged 15 to 29 and youth workers and other specialists who organize and carry out activities in support of youth development. The programme will finance projects for youth activities within four sub-programmes, encompassing the main headings and indicative activities set up in the priorities. The four sub-programmes are: Development of the network of youth information and counseling centers; National youth initiatives and campaigns; Youth volunteering and Promotion and recognition of youth work.

## **6. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth**

The funds provided for youth activities and young people are defined by the State Budget Law of the Republic of Bulgaria and allocated by the Minister of Education and Science through the National Youth Programmes which are administrated by the National center European Youth Programmes and Initiatives – the National Agency for Youth in Action programme.

## **7. European Dimension of youth policy**

As a member state of the European Union, Council of Europe, and a state signed the Cultural Convention, Republic of Bulgaria represented by Youth Directorate participated in different events at international level related to the youth policy.

Representatives of Republic of Bulgaria takes part in Youth Working Party of the Council of European Union, European Steering Committee for Youth of the Council of Europe, different discussions concerning the youth policy organized by European Commission, European Parliament as well as in conferences, seminars, trainings and round tables related to the youth field.

The Republic of Bulgaria through the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science with its guaranteeing and controlling roles contributes to the implementation of the European Union programme “Youth in Action” both at a European level - as a programme country - and at a national level through the National center European Youth Programmes and Initiatives – the National Agency for Youth in Action programme.

## **7.1 Council of Europe.**

The Youth directorate as well as the National center for European Youth Programmes and Initiatives – the National Agency for Youth in Action programme disseminate the information of the Council of Europe related to programmes, seminars and trainings as well as other relevant Council of Europe’s information through its web sites.

**Web site: [www.youth.mon.bg](http://www.youth.mon.bg)**

**Web site: [www.youthbg.info](http://www.youthbg.info)**

## **7.2 European Union.**

### **7.2.1 Implementation of the Youth in Action programme**

The implementation of European Commission programme “Youth in Action” 2007 – 2013 in Bulgaria is run by the National center European Youth Programmes and Initiatives.

The National center for European Youth Programmes and Initiatives – the National Agency for Youth in Action programme, has been established on 3 May 2007 following the recommendations of the European Commission and decision of the European Commission for creating the programme “Youth in Action”. The issue for establishing is to be an executive body a National Agency for Youth in Action programme for a period of 7 years. The National center European Youth Programmes and Initiatives is an independent legal entity.

The role of National authorities who are guaranteeing and controlling body to the EC for the proper expenditure of funds of the programme were the State Agency for Youth and Sport from May 2007 till August 2009 and the Ministry of Education and Science from August 2009 till now.

A directorate responsible for the administration of the National Youth programmes is included in the structure of the National center European Youth Programmes and Initiatives since November 2009. Therefore the National center European Youth Programmes and Initiatives – the National Agency for Youth in Action programme is the executive body for the implementation of youth programmes for non-formal education and training at a European and National level.

**Web site:** [www.youthbg.info](http://www.youthbg.info)

The Republic of Bulgaria is partner of the Eurodesk network since 2002. The National center European Youth Programmes and Initiatives – the National Agency for Youth in Action programme is the partner of the Eurodesk network at national level. The National Eurodesk Network consists of 32 regional points within the country.

**Web site:** [www.eurodesk.bg](http://www.eurodesk.bg)

### **7.2.2 Follow up of the EU Youth Strategy (2010 – 2018) at a national level**

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science following the EU Youth Strategy 2010 – 2018, European Youth Pact and the White Paper on Youth draw a draft National Youth Strategy 2010-2020 which was adopted by the Council of Ministers in Bulgaria on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

The National Youth Strategy 2010-2020 is focused on the building and implementing of a unified, consistent and sustainable, youth policy in Bulgaria based on the sectoral approach, intersectoral cooperation and co-management with the young people at a local, regional and national level. The National Youth Strategy 2010-2020 is aimed to the young people from the aged of 15 to 29 and it is prepared in accordance with the international and European standards for youth work.

The National Youth Strategy 2010-2020 was prepared after an extensive study and analysis of the needs and interests of the young people in the country.

The main strategic objectives are:

1. Promotion of the economic activity and career development of the young people;
2. Improving the access and quality of information;
3. Promotion of the Healthy lifestyle;
4. Prevention of the social exclusion of the disadvantaged young people;
5. Development of the youth volunteering;

6. Raising the public awareness;
7. Young people development in small towns and rural areas;
8. Development of the intercultural and international dialogue;
9. Increasing the role of young people in the crime prevention;

## **8. Further sources of information on youth policy in Bulgaria**

1. Web page of Eurostat – [www.epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu](http://www.epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu)
2. Web page of the National center European Youth Programmes and Initiatives – the National Agency for Youth in Action programme - [www.youthbg.info](http://www.youthbg.info);
3. Web page of the Youth information and consulting centers in Bulgaria - [www.mikc.bg](http://www.mikc.bg) ;