

STRATEGY OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC FOR YOUTH FOR THE YEARS 2014 - 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

Young people under 30 years of age represent an essential part of the Slovak Republic's population (37.4%). Almost 2 million Slovak Republic's citizens, two million futures. Children and young people have specific needs that need to be taken into account in the process of their preparation for a societal and working life. They belong to the most vulnerable groups in the society and they are also a precious source of its development.

The Strategy of the Slovak Republic for youth for the years 2014-2020 (thereinafter referred to as "Strategy") defines strategic objectives of the policy towards youth, while it reflects youth's needs particularly in the field of young people's education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, their participation, health, wellbeing and relation to nature, social inclusion and volunteering. It tackles also global themes and defines strategic objectives within the youth work.

The Strategy aims to contribute to increasing the quality of young people's life, particularly through developing personalities of Slovak Republic's citizens as cultured personalities that are being prepared to work in a constantly changing democratic environment and use their creative potential in practice as well as in their active participation in the society.

The Strategy is a result of an active dialogue between youth and the representatives of the state administration, regional and local self-governments and the non-governmental sector.

2. BASIS FOR THE STRATEGY

Basis for the Strategy's preparation encompasses

- legal regulations valid in the Slovak Republic and both strategic and conceptual materials namely the Act Nr. 282/2008 Coll. on youth work support and on the amendment the Act Nr. 131/2002 Coll. on universities and on amendment certain laws as subsequently amended and the Act Nr. 406/2011 Coll. on volunteering and on amendment of certain laws,
- EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering adopted by the Council of the European Union on 27. 4. 2009¹,
- EU „Youth on the Move“ initiative, which is part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and which moves young people into the centre of the EU agenda, to create an economy based on knowledge, innovation, high rate of education and skills, flexibility and creativity, inclusive labour markets and active participation in the society,
- Recommendation of the Council as of 22. April 2013 on introducing the guarantee for young people (2013/C120/01)²,

¹ The European Commission's announcement to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering. A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities. The European Commission, 2009, thereinafter referred to as „EU Strategy for Youth: Investing and Empowering“. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0200:FIN:SK:PDF>

- Article 165/2 of the Lisbon Treaty³, which calls for the promotion of young people's involvement in democratic life in Europe,
- The Council of Europe's document titled „Future of the Council of Europe's Youth Policy: AGENDA 2020“⁴,
- AGENDA 21 and the National Strategy of the Slovak Republic's sustainable development⁵.

3. THE STRATEGY'S PILLARS

3.1 Investing in youth

By the data contained in the document named „Youth Report“, which was elaborated by the European Commission in 2012, young people face difficulties in finding a job, their working activity starts after they have reached 25 years of age at the earliest. This results in their economic and social exclusion, which often leads to various mental disorders, because young people cannot be fully included in the society.

The unemployment is at its peak between 15/16 – 24 years of age. Out of the total number of unemployed young people in Slovakia the percentage of those long-term unemployed reaches 54.4%. The unemployed young people's educational level in comparison with other EU-member states is higher, as most of them have completed full secondary-school or university studies. The number of young people, who want to start their own business, is increasing more among secondary-school students than among undergraduates. They perceive an actual beginning of their business as unrealistic due to shortage of financial and other sources. The labour migration of educated young people is growing in the European Union. 27% of young people from Slovakia have an experience with working abroad.

A young person in Slovakia is part of educational process for 17 years on average. When compared with other EU-member states; in Slovakia there is relatively few young people (approximately 5%), who did not complete compulsory school attendance.

Despite these facts a young person's situation at the labour market is difficult. Many try to acquire the missing competences by means of study mobility abroad, which they finance mostly from their own sources (57%). The state contribution covered only 13% and the EU sources only 15% of the costs for young people's study mobility. The remaining 15% of the costs were paid by employers.

The above-mentioned facts influence young people's autonomy. Slovakia and Malta are countries, in which young men leave their parents at the age of 30 – 35 years and young women at the age of 28 – 30 years. The main reason of this tendency is fear that after they have left their parents, they will be exposed to social exclusion and poverty.

² The Council's recommendation as of 22. April 2013 on introducing the guarantee for young people (2013/C120/01). <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:120:0001:0006:SK:PDF>

³ The Lisbon Treaty, which amends and complements the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, 2007. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:FULL:SK:PDF>

⁴ Declarations of the 8th Conference of the Ministers of the Council of Europe responsible for youth, Kyiv, Ukraine, October 2008

⁵ <http://www.minzp.sk/files/dokumenty/strategie-dokumenty/narodna-strategia-trvalo-udrzatelneho-rozvoja-slovenskej-republiky-obsah.rtf>

Aiming to use young people's potential for the country's economic and societal development, **it is necessary to expend more sources for development of those areas of the policies, which affect young people in their everyday life, enhance quality of their life**, contribute to decreasing their social dependence and support their autonomy. This is how Slovakia can become a country, in which young people will want to stay and live. At present day more than 70% of young people in Slovakia would prefer to live in another country.

3.2 Empowering young people's status

It is necessary to encourage and use young people's potential in the renewal of the society and engage them actively in decision-making processes at all levels.

The Strategy is fully compatible with the European frame, in which based on contemporary knowledge on young people's situation there are three general and interlinked objectives that are closely related to the objectives of the renewed social agenda, namely:

- **to create more opportunities** for youth within education and employment,
- **to enhance young people's access to decision-making processes** and encourage young people's full participation in the societal life,
- **to encourage mutual solidarity** between the society and young people.

Within Strategy's each objective there are two or three „areas of activity“ with partial objectives. These encompass education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, participation, youth and the world, health and well-being, social inclusion, volunteerism and finally youth work as a specific supportive objective, whose role is to assist in achieving all other objectives.

The submitted Strategy follows the above-mentioned frame and areas of support in order to achieve maximal possible level of interconnection between European and national level and to strengthen the resulting multiplying effect.

4. THE STRATEGY'S VALUE ORIENTATION

4.1 Cross-sectorial approach

The state policy towards youth includes areas of young people's life, which are on agenda of several state administration bodies. Therefore creation and implementation of an effective policy towards young generation inevitably requires cooperation among affected ministries and other state administration bodies, whose line of business involves measures affecting youth.

4.2 Participation

Youth policy can be effectively ensured, if it is prepared in cooperation with affected ministries and if it is consulted with young people (see paragraph 3.2). Strategic objectives in this document were created pursuant to outcomes of the discussions with young people, young leaders, youth leaders and youth workers. Experts from individual ministries and from

research contributed to the objectives' formulation, in order that Strategy reflects the need of creation of an evidence-based policy.

4.3 Inclusiveness

This Strategy is built on the assumption is each young person has the right to be respected, to have the access to state-care measures and to equal treatment. The Strategy supports young people's full engagement in the society, based on active citizenship and employment of youth of all social strata. The Strategy is based on human rights' respect and protection in a multicultural society and on prevention of all forms of discrimination.

4.4 Solidarity between generations

The Strategy is focused on young people, but it fully respects the need for solidarity and dialogue between generations for the sake of sustainable development and in order to meet the needs of various groups of population.

4.5 Considering the real needs

The Strategy was established on information on young people's situation in the Slovak Republic, extracted from researches and surveys⁶, as well as expert materials. The Strategy's text proposal was created by nine working groups' members (in accordance with the Strategy's areas mentioned in paragraph 5.), which involved state administration bodies' representatives, representatives of self-governments, employers and non-governmental organisations being active in particular area as well as experts, researchers and young people.

The working groups proposed strategic objectives and measures that were subject to consultations with the representatives of relevant organisations and institutions, self-governments and also with young people up to 30 years of age, namely at the level of all Slovakia's self-governing counties. The aim of the consultations was to discuss the actual need and importance of the proposed strategic objectives. The consultations resulted in comments, which were tackled by the working groups and were taken into account in the proposed/suggested Strategy's text. This text was submitted in the Interministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth.

The applied process is in line with the Strategy's value orientation emphasising the significance of young people's engagement in creation of measures and in consultation processes. The Strategy is built on reflection of young people's and experts' actual needs and opinions in individual areas.

5. THE STRATEGY'S AREAS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEARS 2014 – 2020

5.1 Education

Education and employability are closely related to each other and the education's modernization in order to correspond to the labour market's current requirements and prognoses is a highly topical theme. The financial and economic crisis has caused Slovakia's

⁶ www.vyskumymladeze.sk

young inhabitants difficult situation, in which they are facing threat of poverty resulting mainly from a shortage of job opportunities.

Flexibility, permeability of the systems and partnership among all education providers are prerequisites for development of an open system of education, which offers to people necessary competences throughout their whole life.⁷

In Slovakia, we would like to create conditions, so that young people could use the potential of all providers of formal and non-formal education as well as opportunities for spontaneous learning to acquire competences needed for their successful application in life.

Strategic objective 1 PERMEABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

Support an inclusive model of patency of the system of formal and non-formal education of children and youth by means of following tools: a) legislative changes, b) validation of the outcomes of pedagogic and andragogic competences for qualifications in children and youth's education, c) financing of providers (accredited by law) and encouraging a complex inclusive environment within the life-long learning.

Proposed measures

- Elaborate an analysis of legislative conditions enabling patency/permeability and effectiveness of formal and non-formal education of youth in the Slovak Republic.
- Adopt a set of legislative measures for validation of pedagogic abilities and qualifications within formal and non-formal education, for a non-discriminatory model of financing the formal and non-formal education providers' access to public sources and ESF-sources.
- Initiate a rise of the national platform for cooperation and partnership within education, define its mission, status and tools of activities.

5.2 Employability

Young people's unemployment rate in Slovakia reaches 34 % (entry as of 31. 12. 2012)⁸, the average unemployment rate within the EU is 15.4 %⁹. Annually, the Slovak Republic spends 1% of its GDP to decrease the unemployment rate, whereas the EU spends much higher financial amounts in order to mitigate these factors. The Member States have several tools that are available for unemployed young people. The institutional support for unemployed young people is insufficient in Slovakia and only few forms of support exist, which would help them cope with entering the labour market. Practice for graduates is one of the main instruments of the labour market's active policy, which are focused on unemployed graduates, or rather young people up to 26 years of age. Its purpose is to acquire professional skills and practical experience at the employer that correspond to the achieved grade of education of the school's graduate within relevant group of apprentice branches or study branches.

⁷ European Commission: Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes, 2012
http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/sw376_en.pdf

⁸ <http://portal.statistics.sk>

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/pdf/council_dinner/youth_action_team_sk.pdf

Strategic objective 1 ORIENTATION AT THE LABOUR MARKET

Introduce systematic career guidance and thus increase young people's degree of orientation at the labour market.

Proposed measures

- Continue promoting the complex care for young people in career counselling and engage - except for pedagogues – also school counsellors, psychologists and field social workers.

Strategic objective 2 PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Reflect young people's specific needs with a view to improve providing public employment services.

Proposed measures

- Provide a possibility for a systematic supervision and mentoring in the first employment.
- Provide institutional and financial support for counselling services provided by public and private providers.
- Implement specialised employment services that reflect specific needs of a concrete target group of young people, thus, for example, young people stemming from the environment of marginalised Roma communities, children's homes, and young people with health disabilities.

Strategic objective 3 EMPHASIS ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Respond to the labour market's current needs with a focus on vocational education as one of the main preconditions for young people's successful application at the labour market.

Proposed measures

- Introduce dual education's elements within vocational education and preparation (thereinafter referred to as „VEP“) in the Slovak Republic.
- Make a list of study branches and apprentice branches, which go beyond the scope of the labour market's needs as well as a list of study branches and apprentice branches with an insufficient number of graduates needed for the labour market.
- Support equalisation of intergenerational differences and young people's different access to quality vocational education via a more intense use of the Internet within education and through acceptance of quality on-line courses.
- Support the Strategy of inclusive education for young people with health disabilities and provide them access to quality vocational education.

Strategic objective 4 MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYERS

Support of employers in new jobs' creation with a view to increase number of jobs for young people.

Proposed measures

- Motivate employers by means of direct subsidies as well as and/or tax bonuses.
- Stronger focussing systemic measures of the labour market's active policy on young

people and lessen the administrative burden.

- Implement projects and programmes aimed at encouraging young people's application at the labour market.

5.3 Creativity and entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation are among young people's key competences helping develop their potential whether in their employment or in business. Entrepreneurship is an individuals' ability to turn ideas into real actions, take the initiative, take responsibility, accept a risk and achieve goals. A creative employee and a young entrepreneur represent the base for a company's success, economic development and development of the society as a whole. Entrepreneurship directly and positively affects and encourages young people's employability.

According to Eurobarometer¹⁰ survey only every third Slovakia's inhabitant (33%) would prefer becoming an entrepreneur than an employee, if they could choose. By the same survey approximately two thirds (65%) of the respondents from Slovakia consider a possibility of starting their own business within next five years as unrealistic. The most serious reason for such statement is mostly a lack of financial sources for starting and developing an enterprise. The problem of a lack of access to financial sources is felt more strongly by respondents from Slovakia (25%). Further on, 45% of the respondents from Slovakia agree with the statement that the school education gave to them skills and know-how necessary to start an enterprise, but only 32% agree that their school education increased their interest in an entrepreneurial career.

Accessibility to information and counselling remains a serious problem. More than 75% of young entrepreneurs are interested in meeting with experienced entrepreneurs. The fact remains that the younger is the novice entrepreneur, the stronger is their interest in these meetings. 73.77% of the respondents believed that high-quality mentoring is more important for a young entrepreneur than the access to advantaged funds.

Strategic objective 1 INFORMATION ON POSSIBILITIES

Lessen shortage of information on programmes-and-projects' possibilities focused on development of young people's entrepreneurship and identify high-quality, functioning and sustainable programmes and projects.

Proposed measures

- Cover the entrepreneurship agenda by an expert with competences for managing it across government departments with a view to achieve cooperation and targeting at results.

¹⁰ The European Commission 2013: Entrepreneurship in the EU and beyond (Flash Euro barometer 354).
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_354_en.pdf

Strategic objective 2 ENTREPRENEURIAL LITERACY

Support education to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education in accordance with the European policy focused on supporting skills for young people's employability.

Proposed measures

- Involve participation in an entrepreneurship-targeted experiential programme or project in line with the European policies and measures.
- Encourage introduction of entrepreneurial education at all degrees of education, including the non-formal education, but mostly at non-economic schools.
- Clearly define outcomes of education in the field of entrepreneurship for a teacher in lower secondary vocational education, secondary vocational education, full secondary general education, full secondary vocational education and for a teacher in upper vocational education – professional standards.¹¹
- Adapt the existing, effective and successful methods for education in the field of entrepreneurship into formal and non-formal education.
- Introduce teaching the basic entrepreneurial skills by means of online courses on the Internet.

Strategic objective 3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

Encourage entrepreneurial culture by altered perception of businessmen and businesswomen on the base of spreading practical and positive information on their achievements, their benefit for the society and on possibilities of new enterprises' establishment.

Proposed measures

- Create an ambassadors' network of future entrepreneurs' generation and provide successful entrepreneurial examples' presentation at schools as well as through public media. Ambassadors ought to stem from among successful young entrepreneurs and they would become faces of enterprising. They will be assigned to promote the significance of enterprising in the society, emphasise the importance of entrepreneurial skills-and-experience' development in the field of education and show entrepreneurship as a way of career-building, economic self-actualization.
- In cooperation with TV/radio-broadcasting initiate a reality show depicting start-ups for young entrepreneurs, similar to those successful ones in abroad (Dragons' Den in UK, or Den D in the Czech Republic, or The Apprentice).
- Encourage entrepreneurial competitions focused on young people through public media.
- More intensely spread information on entrepreneurship particularly at universities in cooperation with the government department for education and individual universities.
- Provide information on enterprising and on supportive tools for young people's enterprising at relevant institutions' websites (self-governing regions, Regional Development Agencies, secondary schools, universities).

¹¹ § 25 paragraph 3 of the Act Nr. 317/2009 Coll. on pedagogic employees and on amendment of certain laws

Strategic objective 4 COOPERATION WITH ENTREPRENEURS

Encourage and create mentoring programmes for young people with innovative entrepreneurial ideas.

Proposed/suggested measures

- Map the existing mentoring programmes and provide access to information on existing and planned mentoring programmes within formal and non-formal education.
- Create a specific mentoring programme for volunteers within non-formal education in cooperation with companies, entrepreneurs and chambers of commerce with a view to enable learning through mentoring also within non-formal education.

5.4 Participation

Young people's participation in public affairs and societal life does not include only their right to vote and to be voted, but also activism in leisure time. Its assumption is young people's right to be heard and to take part in making decisions about things that affect them. If we want young people to have courage and competences to take such a position, it is necessary to prepare them for it.

Although according to the Slovak Republic's Constitution, the right to be voted is given to the citizens from the age of 21 years; young people's representation in the Slovak Republic's parliament has been low in a long-term period. The proportion of people younger than 30 years was only 5 people out of the total number of 150 Members of Parliament (MPs) in 2012, out of which 4 were men and 1 woman. This represented 3.33% out of the total number¹². The research called "A first-voter's vote" carried-out on a sample of respondents aged 18 – 21 years, tried to find out a secondary school students' interest in elections, whereas it unveiled a zero-interest (29.6%), or a little interest (50.6%) in politics within the relevant target group.¹³

Strategic objective 1 PARTICIPATION IN A MODERN WAY

Encourage innovative forms of young people's participation in the societal life, at the national, regional and community level.

Proposed measures

- Consider a possibility of electronic elections in the Slovak Republic as a motivating and innovative tool in order to increase young people's interest in participation.
- By means of education, ensure increasing the level of competences of the self-governments' employees, who are in charge of youth; as well as the level of competences of the members of local parliaments and simultaneously, through education, ensure spreading information on functioning of the public administration system and information on young people's civic rights and possibilities to participate.
- Define the status of the local youth parliament and the status of the local youth council in the legislation and the extent of their influence on the co-decision-making process.

¹² Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic: Age structure of candidates for MPs and proportion of men and women for the Slovak Republic.

¹³ Žubrová, V.: Hlas prvovoliča. Volebná štúdia prvovoliča Trnavského kraja. Trnava, 2010, s.7.

Strategic objective 2 RESPECT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Encourage a respectful and partnership approach to young people in the school environment at all degrees of the educational system.

Proposed measures

- Encourage partnership and a respectful communication between a school and a young person with a view to invite into a discussion and to respect young people's real voice in all areas related to the school life.
- Create conditions for establishment and activity of pupils' school self-governments at primary schools.
- Create a financial-subsidy framework for support and development of participation in a school environment at all levels of the educational system by supporting pupils' school councils and academic senates.

Strategic objective 3 QUALITY IN PARTICIPATION

Create qualitative standards of youth participation at national, regional and local level.

Proposed measures

- Ensure creation of youth participation's qualitative standards at all levels by means of a grant programme for state and non-governmental organisations from the European Union's sources.

Strategic objective 4 YOUNG PEOPLE HAVING THEIR SAY

Ensure young people's participation by means of information and counselling in the matters that concern them.

Proposed measures

- At the regional and local self-governments' level we recommend to introduce youth-worker job-positions, whose description includes counselling, education and orientation within participation and creating a secure environment for a discussion with young people.
- Create conditions for young people's participation in the municipal councils' meetings at the regional and local level and provide a space for them for sharing opinions.

Strategic objective 5 ON-LINE PARTICIPATION

Encourage e-Democracy and ensure delivering information to young people in a comprehensible language in order to engage a greater number of organised and unorganised young people in participation.

Proposed measures

- Recommend the public administration spread information on possibilities of young people's participation in a comprehensible language.
- Ensure delivering information to young people concerning activities related to their present and future life at official websites of the governmental and self-governmental institutions.

- By means of educational institutions as well as social networks inform and invite young people to safely share their opinions about current problems of the community, municipality and region as well as invite them to search for their solutions.

5.5 Youth and the world

Part of this area is global education that emphasises a global context in learning. It (the global education) enhances awareness about global themes, which affect each individual, develops their critical thinking within these themes and deepens understanding of themes that concern the entire world. The global education's themes provide a space for alteration of an individual's attitudes and they strengthen the realisation of one's own role in the world. It motivates people to responsibility and educates towards accepting an active global citizen's values.¹⁴

Under young people's mobility we understand any stay abroad with a view to acquire new knowledge, abilities and skills, work experience and, last but not least, experience with various cultures. A short-term or a long-term experience with a stay abroad is considered as a standard; it increases applicability of future careers also at the Slovak labour market.

Strategic objective 1 MOTIVATION TO GLOBAL ISSUES

Create opportunities for youth and develop their motivation to engagement in global challenges' solution at local and national level by means of youth activities.

Proposed measures

- Continuously evaluate global education's projects, particularly their impact on the target groups by means of the developed methodology for measuring quality and impact of global education in formal and non-formal education.
- Incorporate global education's principles in preparation of professional and voluntary youth workers as well as present and future pedagogic employees.
- Develop young people's key competences (critical thinking, realisation of the connections between one's own action and global impact, work with the information, alterations of attitudes, critical media reflection, participation, civic engagement etc.) by encouraging the global education's activities in formal and non-formal education.

Strategic objective 2 RECOGNITION OF MOBILITY'S CONTRIBUTION

Encourage and recognise contribution of youth's and youth workers' mobility and develop international cooperation with an aim to support transition of know-how from other countries, increase the quality of youth work and increase awareness of interconnections between local actions and their global impacts.

Proposed measures

- Promote the mobility as a part of the educational process in formal and non-formal education.
- Support sustainability and ensure exploitation of grant programmes in the field of youth mobility.
- Create conditions for institutions for effective use of youth mobility and create

¹⁴ National Strategy for Global Education of the Slovak Republic 2012 – 2016.

conditions for participants to get involved.

- Create opportunities to support global awareness through youth mobility into countries outside the European Union.
- Increase promotion and possibilities of exchange programmes, grants for a young person's mobility.

5.6 Health and healthy life-style

Health is one of the most manifested values. Support of young people's health is based on complex preventive activities in health-state monitoring, mapping the occurrence of the risk factors of chronic non-contagious diseases, implementation of measures targeted at influencing health determinants, decreasing occurrence of risk factors in population and increasing the involvement of particular societal fractions and individuals in increased engagement in care and responsibility for their own health.

Purpose and scope of the activities for ensuring support and protection of young people's health are in guiding their way of life and behaviour, which is affected by interaction of the environment's several conditions, such as organising the daily programme, coping with physical and mental stress, exercise and relaxing, healthy life-style, health awareness and its manifestations, overweight, smoking, consumption of alcoholic beverages, drug addiction, sexuality-related problems and other.

HBSC research¹⁵ unveiled some worrying numbers in selected indicators related to health. For instance, the occurrence of respondents that eat breakfast every day during working days oscillated between 43% (15-year-old girls) up to 63% (11-year-old boys). The number of respondents, who admitted an everyday physical activity varied from 31% (11-and-13-year-old boys) to 13% (15-year-old girls). 3% of boys and 1% of girls at the age of 11 years as well as 22% of boys and 16% of girls at the age of 15 years confessed smoking at least once a week. Not less than 40% of boys and 31% of girls at the age of 15 years admitted having been drunk at least twice in their lifetime. Out of those, who have ever been drunk; it happened for the first time at the age of 13 years and approximately in one quarter of them the proportion of boys and girls was almost identical. 21% of boys and 12 % of girls at the age of 15 years have ever tried cannabis (marihuana).

Strategic objective 1 HEALTH EDUCATION

Enhance young people's health by strengthening education to health support and health protection, which includes mainly education about prevention of diseases, injuries, violence, and delinquency as well as education about healthy life style.

Proposed measures

- Encourage accreditation of non-formal education „Education to health“, which entirely involves all aspects of education to health including prevention, risk factors for health, health determinants, life style and one's own responsibility for support and protection of health.
- Encourage activities targeted at enhancing young people's environmental awareness

¹⁵ Doc. Andrea Madarasová Gecková, PhD a spol.: Sociálne determinaty zdravia školákov. HBSC, 2011.

in the form of an active stay in the countryside within non-formal education.

- Encourage a young person's personal development¹⁶ by means of free-time sport activities. Focus the free-time activities related to protection of the nature and the environment on a healthy life style – wastes, clean water, clean air, healthy foodstuff, safe transportation etc.
- Encourage young people's pro-environmental behaviour, put emphasis on young people's active participation by gaining practical experience in protection of the nature and the environment, which can be applied in their personal life.

Strategic objective 2 COOPERATION IN THE AREA OF HEALTH

Create conditions for an effective cooperation among all sectors (horizontally and vertically) and by means of a society-wide approach support, protect and enhance young people's health.

Proposed measures

- Strengthen competences of public health service for implementation of society-wide-activities aimed at protection and support of young people's health.
- Strengthen competences of the educational system by ensuring institutional support for health prevention and public health service to implement society-wide-activities aimed at protection and support of young people's health.
- Create a national platform composed of key-sectors representatives and youth representatives that will monitor fulfilment of the objectives and update them in compliance with the needs.
- Provide enlightening/edifying and educational campaigns targeted at youth.

5.7 Social inclusion

Social inclusion / exclusion issue was not complexly elaborated in any strategic document devoted to youth policy and youth work. For this reason it is important to map the present status, identify trends, factors, forms and consequences of various youth groups' social exclusion, to map and specify young people's needs in relation to the social inclusion, analyse the existing measures and identify the absenting ones, tools and services in this area and through this contribute to establishment of a complex and mutually interconnected system targeted at elimination and prevention of social exclusion in various areas and different youth target groups. The proposed objectives and measures are categorised in three basic areas, which concern young people's *needs* affected or threatened by social exclusion, *services* (tools, measures) targeted at elimination or prevention of social exclusion and *providers* of services targeted at elimination or prevention of social exclusion.

Strategic objective 1 MAPPING

Continuously study and evaluate trends, factors, forms and consequences of young people's social exclusion and complexly map young people's needs affected or threatened by social exclusion.

Proposed measures

- Implement a complex and continual quantitative and qualitative research focused on

¹⁶ Erasmus+ and The Conception of the state policy in the field of sport

young people's social exclusion.

- Map and analyse various youth target groups' needs in relation to social inclusion / exclusion.
- Initiate and lead a continuous structured dialogue about social inclusion / exclusion with young people at various levels (national, regional, local).

Strategic objective 2 PREVENTION

Define the content and extent of the measures, tools and services aimed at elimination and prevention of young people's social exclusion.

Proposed measures

- Identify existing services and good practices' examples targeted at prevention or elimination of social exclusion.
- Identify absencing services concerning prevention or elimination of young people's social exclusion.
- Create and experimentally prove new services focused on prevention / elimination of social exclusion.
- Prepare a catalogue / an offer of services in the field of social inclusion.

Strategic objective 3 NEW SERVICES

Improve the quality of existing measures and mutually interconnect existing measures, tools and services and create, test and introduce new services focused on elimination and prevention of young people's social exclusion.

Proposed measures

- Implement audit of existing measures, tools and services provided by different institutions in order to prevent / to stop social exclusion.
- Encourage creating a complex network of demand-oriented and mutually-related services in the field of formal and non-formal education, psychological and specialised pedagogical counselling, social and legal protection and social curatorship, health care, public employment services and social security.
- Define the extent of services ordered by the state for prevention / elimination of young people's social exclusion and quantify the costs related to these services' provision.

5.8 Volunteering

Displaying social solidarity by means of volunteering is important for young people from the viewpoint of their personal development, educational mobility, competition, social coherence and citizenship. The youth volunteering strongly contributes to intergenerational solidarity. Despite this fact, from a long-term aspect, only one third of population over 15 years is involved in formal volunteering in Slovakia, while two thirds remain inactive in this area¹⁷. As for young people's expressing towards civic and political themes¹⁸, the Slovak Republic ranked in the second worst place from among 27 EU-countries.

¹⁷ PhDr. Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová, PhD. a kol.: Dobrovoľníctvo na Slovensku - výskumné reflexie. IUVENTA, Bratislava, 2012.

¹⁸ EU Youth Report. COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT. Status of the Situation of Young People in the European Union. Brussels 2012.

Strategic objective 1 YOUNG PEOPLE IN VOLUNTEERING

Engage in volunteering as many young people from various groups as possible by means of creating varied voluntary opportunities reflecting young people's current needs and trends within volunteering and ensure young people's sustainability in volunteering.

Proposed measures

- Interlink volunteering with formal education at all degrees and types of schools.
- Encourage recognition of skills acquired through young people's volunteering by the system of formal and non-formal education and labour market.
- Promote benefits flowing from volunteering for individuals and for the society and raise awareness about value of volunteering.
- Encourage young people's volunteering, who have specific needs.
- Create tools for support of organisations working with young volunteers, so that they are able to reflect young people's specific needs.
- Create conditions (financial, personal and organisational) for long-term volunteering programmes engaging young people.
- Encourage young volunteers' cross-border mobility.

5.9 Youth work

Youth work is a purposeful activity that reflects young people's needs and leads to a positive development of their personality. It is based on the principle of young people's voluntary participation, partner approach and reciprocal respect. Its role is to contribute to competence building, to finding orientation in life, self-knowledge of an individual as well as a group. Youth work is carried out by workers, who are professionally prepared for this field.

Along with families and other specialists the youth work can help in solving unemployment, low academic achievements, social exclusion and it helps ensure free-time activities. It can also improve skills and encourage transition from young age to adult age. Despite the fact that youth work is non-formal, it must be more professionalised.¹⁹ Within this Strategy the youth work encourages all above-mentioned areas of activities and it contributes to the fulfilment of their strategic objectives.

Non-formal education within youth work has a great potential to assist in solving young people's unemployment. Either through creating the programmes that would work with groups of unemployed young people in a way, which takes into consideration their needs and life-situation (in a form of various national voluntary services) or the programmes, which would work with studying young people in order to prevent their unemployment. However, there is no necessary infrastructure to develop this potential.

Strategic objective 1 VALUE OF YOUTH WORK

Support in a long-term period (also financially) activities leading to recognition of youth work's value and its benefits and thus communicate youth work's benefits towards various target groups.

Proposed measures

- Include a youth worker into the national system of qualifications and make it possible

¹⁹ EU Strategy for Youth: Investing and Empowering

to acquire this qualification also by means of non-formal education.

- Include the subject „Youth work“ into educational curriculum at universities.
- Define the profession „Youth worker“ and include it into legislation related to subjects that carry out this work.
- Create campaigns to raise societal awareness about youth work’s value and its benefit.
- Incorporate institutional support into youth work’s financial system.

Strategic objective 2 YOUTH WORK IN ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

Encourage youth work’s interconnection to the current needs and challenges faced by young people in the Slovak Republic.

Proposed measures

- Harmonise legislation in the field of youth work, so that all entities dealing with youth could do a modern youth work based on its needs.
- Regularly map young people’s needs and current challenges they are facing.
- Set funding of youth work based on mapping its needs.

Strategic objective 3 IMPACT ON THE SOCIETY

Support cooperation of various institutions and entities that are active in the field of youth work with putting emphasis on involvement of the self-government with an aim to ensure a wider societal impact of youth work.

Proposed measures

- Create a multi-funding system of youth work (whereas the state and self-governments should play a dominant role, but not the only one) in order to ensure a targeted, systematic and long-term support for institutions, which provide a high-quality youth work.
- Create and finance education for youth workers and programmes that will contribute to enhancing the quality of their activities and mutual networking.

6. THE TASKS OF THE STRATEGY'S IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURES

6.1 Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

- communicates, coordinates and promotes the Strategy and cooperates with other entities mentioned in the Strategy, and entrusts institutions under its remit with fulfilment of the selected assignments,
- ensures the Strategy's implementation in relevant areas within its everyday activities, such as education, participation and youth work,
- creates conditions for encouraging systematic youth work outside the formal education process,
- coordinates activities of the bodies of state administration, regional and local self-government and encourages synergy of their measures in individual areas, mentioned in the Strategy,
- manages and directs activities of the interministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth (see point 6.6),
- in 2017, it will hold counselling meetings related to continuous fulfilment of the strategic objectives at regional and nation-wide level,
- in 2017 and 2018, it will coordinate preparation of background materials for elaboration of the Youth Report 2018 (thereinafter referred to as „Youth Report“), which will be submitted to the negotiation of the Slovak Republic's Government and the Slovak Republic's National Council,
- supports research activities that are related to elaboration of the Youth Report,
- ensures regular monitoring of the strategic objectives' fulfilment.

6.2 Other Ministries and bodies of the state administration, the government's counselling bodies and committees

- adopt measures that ensure fulfilment of the strategic objectives also in cooperation with other bodies of the state administration on the principle of interministerial and cross-sectoral cooperation,
- nominate their representatives in the interministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth (see point 6.6),
- actively cooperate in preparation of counselling meetings in 2017,
- in planning the research and survey activities; they take into consideration necessary background materials for elaboration of the Youth Report (see point 6.1).

6.3 Self-governing Region

- coordinates, communicates, prepares and implements measures that are directed to the Strategy's fulfilment at the self-governing region's level, whereas it entitles institutions under its remit, such as the Regional Youth Centre and the like, with ensuring specific tasks,
- in preparation of the own strategy in relation to youth, respecting the region's particularities, it cooperates with schools, school facilities, non-governmental organisations, employers and other stakeholders working in the field of youth work and youth policy on the self-governing region's territory,
- in implementation of the regional self-governing policy in relation to youth, it cooperates with other bodies of the state administration, communities, municipalities and non-governmental organisations on the self-governing region's territory,

- establishes a cross-sectoral working group for youth at the self-governing region's territory, which functions as a counsellor in implementation of the systemic measures in the field of youth work and youth policy.

6.4 Municipality

- in compliance with the Strategy, after having taken into consideration its own particularities and possibilities, it creates and implements its own strategy in relation to youth at the community's level, while collaborating with schools, school facilities, non-governmental organisations, employers and other entities working in the field of youth work and youth policy on the community's territory,
- provides a platform for creation and implementation of the local policy in relation to youth according to current needs,
- is entitled to establish a cross-sectoral working group for youth at the community's level, which functions as a counsellor in implementation of the systemic measures within youth work and youth policy.

6.5 School educational facilities

- youth centres, children's school clubs and school dormitories create conditions for a systematic and regular work with children and youth,
- organise activities for children and youth and engage youth in preparation, implementation and evaluation of these activities that respond to young people's current trends and needs,
- cooperate with the founder and other entities in development of youth work under their remit and in implementation of the Strategy within their activity.

6.6 Interministerial working group for the state policy in the field of youth

- holds regular sessions since 2008 and it consults, proposes and evaluates the state's objectives and measures related to youth,
- is founded for effective and complex preparation of the measures directed to the Strategy's implementation and with a view to evaluate fulfilment of these measures,
- consists representatives of bodies of the state administration, self-governing regions and umbrella non-governmental organisations in the field of youth, which tackle the youth issue in relation to some strategic objectives,
- assesses and comments the measures for the Strategy's implementation, which require coordination of partial activities of several entities,
- assesses the accepted proposals and submits its own proposals of the measures for implementation of strategic objectives,
- offers a space for exchange of information concerning fulfilment of the measures within the Strategy's implementation in individual areas.

7. THE STRATEGY'S IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

In order to achieve the strategic objectives contained in this document, the respective central bodies of the state administration will ensure creation, implementation and evaluation of the purpose-built projects or initiatives. In doing so, they will focus on fulfilment of a specific strategic objective and will adopt measures, which are suggested directly in the Strategy; or they will define a new relevant measure. The above-mentioned measures will be involved in the principal tasks' plan of the respective government department. Other entities that will be involved in the Strategy's implementation will prepare projects and ensure initiatives in cooperation with the respective central body of the state administration or within their competence.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic will inform on the status of preparation and implementation of the above-mentioned projects and initiatives by means of an interministerial working group for state policy in the field of youth; respective reports will be drawn up annually.

The Strategy's implementation will be evaluated amid its duration, i.e. in 2017 and at the end of its period in 2020. In compliance with the Strategy's principles, the evaluation will take a form of consultations at regional and national level, in which young people together with representatives of the state administration, regional and local self-government as well as with representatives of non-governmental sector will evaluate the Strategy's implementation. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic in cooperation with the interministerial working group will ensure background papers for consultations, which will include outputs and outcomes of the carried-out projects and initiatives.

With the aim to prepare relevant background papers for other strategic and conceptual materials within this area, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic will coordinate preparation of a complex Youth Report in 2020, which will cover all areas mentioned in this Strategy.

8. CONCLUSION

This Strategy does not only involve assumptions and objectives related to various key-players, but it emphasises the Slovak Republic's intention to strengthen young people's status in all spheres of life and guarantee their status in the society on the basis of partnership.

The Slovak Republic realises that it needs a modern approach in relation to young generation and the ability to respond sensitively to young people's needs.

Youth as a target group of this Strategy stands in the limelight of several government departments and entities of the state administration, and therefore the Strategy adopts interministerial approach as one of the preconditions for a successful implementation of the proposed measures and their synergic effect.

The Strategy creates favourable conditions for development of young people's knowledge, skills, and usage of their potential, work and active participation in the society. It founds conditions for a broader cooperation among individual areas of youth policy and it strengthens the status of youth work as the state's supportive mechanism.