

LAW ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND YOUTH POLICIES

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Chapter I.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Scope of Law

Article 1

The scope of regulation of this Law shall include the forms of youth organizing, participation of the youth in youth policy-making processes and youth-related decision-making, strategic documents at the national and local level, as well as the activities and measures undertaken by state administration bodies and units of local self-government for promotion of the position of youth in the society, as well as for informing and joint planning of activities related to and for youth.

Purpose of the Law

Article 2

This Law is aimed at:

- 1) Designing and implementing a youth policy at all levels through a multi-sectoral approach, starting from youth needs and interests;
- 2) Strengthening youth participation in the youth-related policy-making processes, active informing, promotion and protection of youth interests, as well as raising the awareness of the importance of youth and their societal role;
- 3) Promoting inter-generational partnership to support youth participation in the decision-making and policy-making process;
- 4) Supporting and promoting youth organization;
- 5) Supporting the structural dialogue at the national and local level;
- 6) Encouraging voluntarism, youth activism and youth work;
- 7) Encouraging personal, professional and social development among the youth.

Definitions

Article 3

Certain terms used in this Law shall have the following meaning:

- 1) “Youth” are people aged 15 to 29;
- 2) “Youth Policy” is a set of measures and activities that are undertaken to meet the needs of the youth for the purpose of reaching their full potential;
- 3) “Youth Participation” is a process that ensures youth participation and joint decision-making regarding policies and programmes that directly or indirectly shape the life of youth.
- 4) “Youth work” represents an organized and systematic process of education and support of the authentic development of youth for the purpose of reaching their overall personal, social and societal potential and their active inclusion in community life;

- 5) “Youth workers” are qualified people who possess the competences needed to work with youth by implementing activities by which their personal and social development is supported through non-formal and informal learning.

Article 4

The gender-specific terms used in this Law are used neutrally and equally apply to persons of both genders, male and female.

Article 5

(1) This Law is based on the following basic principles:

- 1) Equality, equal opportunities and prohibition of discrimination;
- 2) Independence, pluralism and democracy in all forms of youth organizing;
- 3) Transparency and publicity;
- 4) Raising the awareness of the importance of youth and their societal role;
- 5) Multiculturalism, inter-culturalism and inclusiveness in active youth participation;
- 6) Multi-ethnic inclusion and relatedness between youth organisation and the leading of youth-related public policies;
- 7) Responsibility and solidarity among the youth;
- 8) Inter-institutional cooperation in the design and implementation of youth policies.

(2) All forms of youth organizing, as well as the state administration bodies, shall abide by the principles referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article I in their work and in all youth-related activities.

Chapter II.

FORMS OF YOUTH ORGANIZING AND YOUTH REPRESENTATION

Youth organizing

Article 6

Youth organizing shall refer to any organization registered in line with the Law on Associations and Foundations, whose highest decision-making body shall consist of at least two thirds of youth aged 15 to 29 and whose purpose and activities shall be defined and aimed at promoting youth interests.

Organization for Youth

Article 7

Organization for youth shall refer to any organization registered in line with the Law on Associations and Foundations which is not led by youth or is political party youth wing, youth section within a trade union organized as part of another legal entity whose programme goals and activities are partly aimed at improving youth interests.

Youth Umbrella Organizations

Article 8

- (1) Youth Umbrella Organizations shall refer to organizations in which the forms of youth organizing participate and unite for the purpose of achieving the joint goals in specific areas of youth interest.
- (2) A Youth Umbrella Organization:
 - shall have at least ten members from at least five planning regions of the Republic of North Macedonia;
 - shall have two thirds of youth in the highest decision-making body;
 - shall be registered in line with the Law on Associations and Foundations.
- (3) A Youth Umbrella Organization shall have a Statute.

Article 9

Youth Umbrella Organizations can:

- Participate in the process of designing laws, policy documents and other strategic documents in the sphere in which they operate;
- Participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth policies in the spheres in which they operate;
- Support youth organizing and association in the Republic of North Macedonia;
- Represent their joint goals in the specific spheres of youth interest in which they operate;
- Propose measures and activities to decision-makers in the spheres in which they operate;
- Conduct analyses and research in relation to youth development in the society.
- Implement activities prescribed by this Law, other bylaws and the Statute of the organization.

National Youth Assembly

Article 10

- (1) The National Youth Assembly shall refer to the body of forms of youth organizing which elects youth representatives to the Advisory Body, designs priorities and policies for youth representatives' advocacy and coordinates and follows their work (hereinafter: Youth Assembly).
- (2) The work of the Youth Assembly shall be regulated with its Rules of Procedure.

Article 11

- (1) The National Assembly shall be convened by an Initiative Board by at least two-thirds of the forms of youth organizing registered in the Registry;
- (2) The Initiative Board has a mandatory obligation to notify all forms of youth organising from the Registry about the scheduled sessions of the Youth Assembly;
- (3) The Youth Assembly shall convene at least once a year;
- (4) A session shall be convened at the Youth Assembly upon request of one-third of the forms of youth organising included in the Register or upon request by two-thirds of the youth representatives;

- (5) The operational costs for the organising of the sessions, based on a previously submitted financial plan, shall be covered from the funds provided from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia, from the relevant state administration body in charge of youth-related affairs.

Article 12

The scope of work of the Youth Assembly shall include:

- Election of youth representatives to the Advisory Body;
- Designing of policies and priorities;
- Monitoring the work of the youth representatives;
- Reviewing of youth representatives' reports, and
- Other activities pursuant to this Law and the Rules of Procedure.

Chapter III.

REGISTRY OF FORMS OF YOUTH ORGANIZING

Article 13

- (1) The Registry of Youth Organizations and Organizations for Youth shall be maintained by the Agency for Youth and Sport.
- (2) Upon entry into the Registry referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, the organizations are required to submit to the Agency for Youth and Sport:
- Request for registration into the Registry;
 - Decision for completed registration at the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia proving that the organisation has been registered for at least one year;
 - Current Status issued by the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia, not older than six months, which proves the active status of the organisations;
 - Statute of the organization;
 - Operational programme of the organization;
 - Annual report on youth-related activities;
 - Total number of members of the organization, and
 - Number of members aged 15 to 29.
- (3) The documents referred to in paragraph 2, line 2 and 3 of this Article shall not be required for the Organizations for Youth referred to in Article 7 of this Law.
- (4) The Agency for Youth and Sport shall pass a decision for registration within 15 days from the day of receipt of the request for entry in the Registry.
- (5) The form, content and manner of maintaining the Registry shall be prescribed by the Agency for Youth and Sport.
- (6) The Agency for Youth and Sport shall update the Registry referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article no later than 30 June of the current year for the previous year.
- (7) The Registry shall be public and available online on the website of the Agency for Youth and Sport.

Chapter IV.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

National Youth Policy Advisory Body

Article 14

- (1) The National Youth Policy Advisory Body (hereinafter: Advisory Body) is a body for cooperation between the youth representatives and representatives of the state administration bodies, which has an advisory and supervisory role in the implementation of youth policies and youth activities.
- (2) The Advisory Body shall be established with a Decision of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- (3) The Advisory Body shall consist of not more than eight representatives nominated by state administration bodies, and nine youth representatives elected by the National Youth Assembly, one of whom shall be the president.
- (4) The members nominated by the state administration bodies shall have a two-year term of office with the right to one re-election. Youth representatives elected by the representative body shall have a two-year term of office with the right to one re-election.
- (5) The Advisory Body shall have Rules of Procedure.
- (6) The administrative, financial and logistical support for the operation of the Advisory Body shall be provided by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Article 15

- (1) The National Youth Policy Advisory Body referred to in Article 14 of this Law shall have the following competences:
 - Providing an opinion and recommendations on the implementation of regulations and youth policies;
 - Providing an opinion on the National Youth Strategy and the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy;
 - Providing an opinion on budget funds earmarked for youth, as well as proposals, opinions and recommendations on the funding of youth-related activities;
 - Initiating consideration of youth-related issues to the Government and the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia;
 - Proposing introduction of mechanisms for assessment of youth participation and fulfilment of youth interests in the societal life;
 - Publishing reports (thematic and periodic) on the rights, opportunities and needs of the youth in the Republic of North Macedonia;
 - Following of European Union youth recommendations and advocating for improved youth policies;
 - Organizing events and consultations regarding its operation with youth organizations and with youth;
 - Conducting other activities related to the youth and their interests, in line with this Law and the Rules of Procedure referred to in Article 14, paragraph (5) of this Law.

Chapter V.

LOCAL YOUTH COUNCILS

Establishment of Local Youth Councils

Article 16

- (1) The municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje shall ensure the establishment of Local Youth Councils through their Statute.
- (2) The municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje shall have an advisory and representative role in the sphere of youth-related issues and policies.
- (3) The representatives of the Local Youth Council shall have the right to:
 - Propose youth-related items on the agenda of the Council of the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje;
 - Initiate youth-related issues in relation to the operation of the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje;
 - Initiate, participate and give feedback on the process of the Local Youth Strategy and other policies;
 - Submit information to the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje on youth-related issues;
 - Perform other advisory and advocacy work in line with this Law.
- (4) The number of members of the Local Youth Councils shall be an odd number and shall be no more than one third of the members of the Council of the municipality, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje, and no less than five people.
- (5) The members of the Local Youth Council shall have a two-year term of office with the right to one re-election.

Local Youth Assembly

Article 17

- (1) For the purpose of constituting a Local Youth Assembly, an initiative board shall be convened, composed of all forms referred to in paragraph (4) of this Article.
- (2) The Initiative Board shall open a call for the constitutive Local Youth Assembly in line with the Statute of the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje, in accordance with the principle of transparency and publicity.
- (3) The Initiative Board referred to in paragraph (2) of this Article shall be established only for the purposes of organising a constitutive Local Youth Assembly;
- (4) Youth organizations, organizations for youth, political party youth wings, pupils' and students' organizations and other forms of youth association can become members of the Youth Assembly.
- (5) The forms of organisation and association referred to in paragraph (4) of this article do not need to be registered in the municipality, municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje, but are obliged to have activities on the territory of the municipality, municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje, whose Assembly they are part of.

- (6) The forms of organizing that participate in the annual Youth Assembly nominate a delegate and a deputy-delegate.
- (7) The delegate and the deputy-delegate referred to in the paragraph (6) of this article shall be inhabitants of the municipality, municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje, aged 15 to 29.

Election of members of the Local Youth Council

Article 18

- (1) The Youth Assembly shall publish an open call for members of the local youth council.
- (2) The open call shall be published on the website of the municipality, municipalities in the City of Skopje, and the City of Skopje.
- (3) The Youth Assembly shall elect members of the Local Youth Council in direct elections, through secret ballot to which the delegates of the Local Youth Assembly shall be entitled.
- (4) Those candidates who have won the majority of votes from the delegates present on the local youth assembly shall be considered elected as members of the Local Youth Council.
- (5) Members of the Local Youth Councils of the municipalities, municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje shall be verified by the Council of the municipalities, municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje upon receipt of a decision for the election of members passed by the Youth Assembly of the municipalities, municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje .
- (6) A president and vice president shall be elected from the lines of the elected members of the Local Youth Council.

Chapter VI.

YOUTH POLICIES

National Youth Strategy

Article 19

- (1) The National Youth Strategy is a strategic document that sets midterm goals and priorities for the development of youth policies and promotion of youth interests, and also determines the organizational, financial and administrative measures for their fulfilment.
- (2) The National Strategy shall also contain an implementation Action Plan with defined activities, dynamics, leading entities and budgetary projections, as well as requirements and indicators for evaluation of the implementation of the National Youth Strategy.
- (3) The National Youth Strategy shall be passed by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia for a five-year period.
- (4) The Agency for Youth and Sport shall design the National Youth Strategy through a consultative, inclusive and transparent process and upon the receipt of an opinion issued by the youth advisory body it shall submit it to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia.

- (5) The Agency for Youth and Sport shall design the Action Plan for the National Youth Strategy and upon the receipt of an opinion issued by the National Youth Advisory Body it shall submit it to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia for a period of one to three years whereby an implementation budget shall also be submitted.
- (6) The Action Plans shall be adopted by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- (7) The National Youth Strategy shall be implemented using funds from the budget of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- (8) The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia shall prepare an annual report on the implementation of the National Youth Strategy and Action Plan which is reviewed by the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia on no later than the 30 June of the current year for the previous year.

Local Youth Strategy

Article 20

- (1) The Local Youth Strategy is a strategic document which shall, in line with the National Youth Strategy, set midterm goals and priorities for the development of youth policies and promotion of youth interests at the local level, and shall also determine the organizational, financial and administrative measures for their fulfilment.
- (2) The Local Strategy shall also contain an implementation Action Plan with defined activities, dynamics, leading entities and budgetary projections, as well as requirements and indicators for evaluation of the implementation of the Local Youth Strategy.
- (3) The Local Youth Strategy shall be passed by the Council of the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje for a five-year period.
- (4) The Local Youth Strategy shall be designed by the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje, in cooperation with the Local Youth Council.
- (5) The Action Plans for the Local Youth Strategy shall be designed by the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje, in cooperation with the Local Youth Council, and shall be adopted by the Council of the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje for a period of one to three years, and the implementation budget thereof shall also be submitted.
- (6) The Local Youth Strategy shall be implemented using budget funds from the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje.

Chapter VII.

YOUTH SERVICES

Youth Office

Article 21

The municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje shall establish a Youth Office that will coordinate youth work in the municipalities, the

municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje and it shall be the primary youth access point at the local level.

Youth Centre

Article 22

- (1) Youth Centres are places in which programmes are designed and implemented to improve youth wellbeing, the development of the personal, social and professional life of youth, information of great interest for the youth and other aspects of youth life.
- (2) Youth workers shall be responsible for working with the youth at the Youth Centres.
- (3) The Youth Centres shall be established through cooperation of the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje with the youth forms of organizing regulated by this Law.

Youth Officer

Article 23

- (1) State administration bodies, the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje shall be required to appoint a Youth Officer, a person responsible for the running of the Youth Office for coordination, implementation and oversight of youth-related affairs in the scope of the competences of the institution.
- (2) Youth Officers referred to in paragraph (1) of this article shall prepare annual reports on the operation of the institutions in the sphere of youth which they shall submit to the Agency for Youth and Sport and shall publish them on the websites of the state administration bodies, the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje.
- (3) Contact information of Youth Officers referred to in paragraph 1 of this article shall be publicly available through the bulletins of the state administration bodies, the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje.

Article 24

The Agency for Youth and Sport shall establish a research centre on various youth-related topics.

Chapter VIII.

FUNDING

Article 25

- 1) For the implementation of this Law, funds in the amount of at least 0.3% of the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia shall be allocated annually.
- 2) From the budgets of the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje, funds in the amount of at least 0.1% shall be allocated for youth annually.

Chapter IX.

TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 26

- (1) The Agency for Youth and Sport shall pass bylaws to regulate the form, content and manner of maintaining the Registry, prescribed by this Law, within 90 days from the day of entry into force of this Law.
- (2) The Agency for Youth and Sport shall establish the Registry of forms of youth organizing within 30 days from the adoption of the bylaw referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article.
- (3) The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia shall pass a National Youth Strategy in line with the provisions of this Law, within 18 months from the day of entry into force of this Law.
- (4) The municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje shall establish a youth office within one year from the day of entry into force of this Law.
- (5) The state administration bodies, municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje shall appoint a Youth Officer within one year from the day of entry into force of this Law.
- (6) Within one year from the day of entry into force of this Law, Local Youth Councils shall be established in line with the provisions of this Law, and the existing Local Youth Councils whose mandate has not yet expired, shall be transformed in accordance with the provisions of this Law.
- (7) Within five years from the day of entry into force of this Law, each municipality shall have enabled the functioning of at least one Youth Centre on the territory of the municipality.
- (8) Within one year from the day of entry into force of this Law, a research centre for various youth-related topics shall be established within the Agency for Youth and Sport.

Article 27

This Law shall enter into force on the eight day from the day of its publication in the Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia.