

YOUTH and SPORT



Through its Youth Policy, the EU encourages youth participation in democracy; supports youth's social engagement; and strives to ensure resources needed to play an active role in the society for every young person. To encourage youth activation and in particular participation in decision making processes, the EU celebrated the year 2022 as the EU Year of Youth and the year 2023 as the EU Year of Skills.

Assistance figures

The support from the EU to the young people and sports is reflected in the encouragement of education of young people, their mobility and inclusion in decision-making, as well as sport development and the promotion of healthy living. As part of the Erasmus+ program, over 16,000 Serbian students received scholarships to study in EU member states, whereas over 80 organizations and sports associations from Serbia have benefited from the projects in the field of sports.

Key projects

- ▶ Serbia has taken part in **the largest European youth, sports, and education programme—Erasmus+** as a full-fledged member since 2019. With EU support, young people, athletes, and students from Serbia participate in exchange and training projects on an equal footing as their peers from the EU. More than 16,000 young people from Serbia have been given a chance at intercultural learning and exchange. In parallel, institutions from Serbia have attracted over 4,300 young people, students, and teachers from Europe. From the beginning of the programme, Serbia has been the leading country in the region when it comes the number of approved projects and participants in mobility projects, as well as the level of funding.
- ▶ In order to support youth dialogue and reconciliation in the Western Balkans region, the European Union supports the work of **RYCO—Regional Youth Cooperation Office**. The EU supported the RYCO Superschool project with EUR 5 million, aimed at the exchange of high school students and the cooperation of teaching staff in the area of the Western Balkans
- ▶ In 2018, the European Union launched the **Discover EU** initiative, which offers young people the opportunity to travel through Europe and encourage learning about cultures, the history of European civilisation and explore the identity of the EU. This initiative is available to all young people in Serbia.
- ▶ The EU has invested over 6 million euros for the construction and renovation of over 40 sports facilities throughout Serbia. Over 100 thousand citizens and children actively use renovated or newly built sports centers, swimming pools, gymnasiums in primary and secondary schools, equipment for sports gymnastics, etc. A significant part of these projects enabled people with disabilities and special needs to play sports. Also, sports associations in Serbia have at their disposal Erasmus+ program funds that provide support to the sports sector.

Priorities for Serbia

The new youth strategy until 2030 is yet to be adopted. It needs to be followed by an action plan and mechanisms to ensure inclusive monitoring and reporting. The national youth council remains active and involves youth representatives. Youth policy and support mechanisms are unevenly developed at local level and should be further strengthened. The revision and/or preparation of local youth action plans in line with the provisions of the planning system law should be accelerated. The trend of emigrating young and skilled people continued. The unemployment and inactivity rates among young people remain high. The action plan for the implementation of the youth guarantee mechanism is yet to be adopted. (Annual Report 2022)